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ABSTRACT

This book for school administrators offers methods for effecting changes in school culture and practices so that inclusion of students with all kinds of disabilities is successful. The recommendations are based on such principles as the following: professionals must collaborate to serve students with disabilities appropriately; students are disadvantaged by a lack of diversity in classrooms; instructional environments must reflect real world demands, such as interdependence and independence; and curricula must incorporate a broader knowledge and skill base than traditional academic courses. After an introduction which identifies inclusion principles, defines terminology, and summarizes federal legislation requirements, individual chapters address the following general topics: (1) leadership; (2) the planning process; (3) assessment; (4) curriculum and instruction; (5) student supports; (6) family and community; (7) business management; and (8) personnel considerations. Each chapter discusses factors to consider and offers how-to strategies and sample forms and checklists. A resource section lists six agencies and associations concerned with disabilities. (Contains 10 references.) (DB)

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IDEAS

for

INCLUSION

The School Administrator's Guide

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IDEAS

for

INCLUSION

The School
Administrator's Guide

Anne M. Beninghof
&
Anne Louise T. Singer

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Introduction

"Imagine you are the long-standing, successful coach of a basketball team," suggests Jerry Patterson, the author of *Leadership for Tomorrow's Schools* (1993, p.1). Your team is about to play in the league championship, when suddenly you are informed that several of the rules have changed:

- Double and triple dribbling will be allowed.
- Teams can have as many players as they choose.
- The length of the game will be determined arbitrarily.

Patterson poses the question, "As a coach, how would you react to these rule changes?" This analogy clearly sets the stage for a discussion concerning leadership for today's and tomorrow's schools. Many educational leaders feel that just as they have reached a point where their "teams" are working successfully, the rules of the game have been changed. As "coaches," they are faced with having to redirect their teams, change game plans, alter the line up, and deliver a new pregame speech to energize the players. While this analogy effectively describes circumstances throughout the field of education, it seems particularly fitting for special education.

The "Old Rules"

For years, administrators and teachers have been given a set of special education rules to play by that include the following:

Professionals who have been trained in special education techniques are the only individuals who can and should provide services to students with disabilities.

Many special and general educators have come to believe that students with disabilities share more differences than similarities with other students. In addition, a myth has developed that special educators have a magical bag of tricks, one that is somehow vastly different than the bags general classroom teachers utilize. Both of these notions have led to what Sergiovanni (1992) calls "trained incapacity" (p.4).

Students must conform to a certain set of standards if they are to be accepted in general education classrooms. If students do not conform, it is to everyone's advantage to have them removed.

Discussions concerning "melting pots" vs. "tossed salads" abound in our communities and schools as people come to terms with their beliefs about diversity. Yet, while much of this discussion centers on the educational benefits of bringing together diverse cultures, races, and backgrounds, many teachers hold firm on the notion that students with disabilities detract from other students' learning experiences.

Students with disabilities are better served by instructional environments that are quiet, provide a high level of adult assistance, and are geared toward like students.

While there is very little research that would support the above stated rules, there are a great number of teachers who would profess these maxims to be absolutes. And although these instructional environments may be helpful for some students, more often they foster excessive reliance on adults and an inability to generalize learning to real world environments.

Students with disabilities have needs which cannot be met within the traditional academic curriculum, whereas students without disabilities can have all of their needs met within the traditional academic curriculum.

The rule can be also be stated this way: It is not the role of the classroom teacher to teach social skills. However, now that students with and without disabilities are coming to school in need of a wider variety of skills, teachers must reexamine what all students need in order to be successful.

The "New Rules"

These "rules," and others like them, have guided team training, planning, and action for so many years, that many "coaches" are disoriented by the apparently sudden rule changes that are part of the inclusive schools movement. A few of the new rules include the following:

All professionals must collaborate in order to bring together the necessary skills and knowledge to serve students with disabilities appropriately.

The special educator cannot adequately address the needs of a student with disabilities if he/she works alone. Nor can the general classroom teacher adequately educate the same students, paying attention only to the portion of the students' time allotted to his/her classroom.

Students are disadvantaged by a lack of diversity of race, culture, and ability in their classrooms. Therefore, all classrooms must be diverse.

Not only is diversity something the effective teacher can manage, it is something he/she should welcome because of its integral part in the learning process. Students will be more prepared for life after school if they have been nurtured in environments that welcomed various abilities and backgrounds.

Instructional environments must reflect real world demands, such as interdependence and independence, if students are to be sufficiently prepared for life after school.

> Real world environments are usually busy, noisy places in which individuals must be able to tune out distractions, seek out help at appropriate times, and use others as resources. Rather than hope that students will be able to transfer their skills to these types of environments, schools must offer learning opportunities that prepare students for this reality.

Curricula must incorporate a broader knowledge and skill base than traditional academic courses in order to prepare all students adequately.

> It is not just the student with disabilities that needs instruction in communication skills, group cooperation, and work behaviors. All students graduating from our schools will need these skills in order to succeed in the work place and community. Therefore, it is the role of schools to ensure that these skills are a part of the curriculum, available to all, and not left only to those who have been identified and removed as "special."

Patterson encourages us to consider what the basketball coach feels like when the rules of the game change: disorientation, reluctance, refusal. Clearly, however, these feelings go much further than just among coaches. Consider what the team members are feeling as they receive the news of these rule changes. After all, some may think, the coaches only have to **guide**, they do not actually have to **play**. The players themselves are left implementing the new rules on the front lines. Just like the coaches, the players are likely to feel disoriented and reluctant. It follows that teachers may also be disoriented by the rapidly changing special education rules, especially as they pertain to inclusion of students with disabilities. After years of being encouraged to send students down the hall or out of the building to someone who could better meet their needs, now they are being told that they had the skills all along! Not only that, but they are also told by many that what they have done to students for so many years has been damaging and unethical. It is no wonder that many educators are dragging their feet about jumping on the inclusion bandwagon. Perhaps their reluctance is justified.

What is the educational leader of today and tomorrow to do? How can inclusion be successfully adopted in schools? Many educational leaders are beginning to realize that the focus must be on a school's values and culture. Schein (1985) writes "in fact, there is a possibility—underemphasized in leadership research—that the only thing of real importance that leaders do is create and manage culture" (p.2). Others feel that the primary task of successful leaders is "to build school culture" (Hoy and Miskel, 1991, p. 297). Sergiovanni (1992) writes, "what each principal chooses to do is a function of the heart and head, and the substance of these is a question of values" (p.10).

If it can be accepted that educational leadership is primarily about creating and influencing school culture and values, this is a conclusion very well suited to inclusion. Inclusion is all about culture; about the collective values and philosophies of educators applied to the group of students they are entrusted to serve. As one school administrator says to her staff, "Inclusion is a philosophy, not an adjective" (Hayes-Alarcon, personal communication, 1994). Simply tacking on the word "inclusion" (i.e., "this is an inclusive school" or "we have three inclusion kids") does not bring about true inclusion. Instead, inclusion comes about through hard work on the part of administrators, teachers, related professionals, support personnel, parents, and students—all the players on the team. Hard work that over time changes the culture of the school from exclusive to **inclusive**; from "some don't belong" to "**all belong**," from "my kids" and "your kids" to "**our kids**."

To influence this change, educational leaders must explore each of the following areas:

- Leadership
- Planning Processes
- Assessment
- Curriculum and Instruction
- Student Supports
- Family and Community
- Business Management
- Personnel Considerations

In each of these areas there are methods for effecting changes in school culture and practices so that inclusion is successful. The following chapters present several of these methods, used by school administrators in districts all over the country. These strategies have worked in actual school settings to successfully include students with all types of disabilities in all types of schools and communities. Each chapter provides several guidelines to consider and is followed by a straightforward, how-to description of several strategies. Finally, a resource section (page 135) is provided that will direct you to major information clearinghouses and national organizations that may be able to support your inclusion efforts with information and other types of assistance.

One final consideration—while it is important for "coaches" to have information about their own administrative strategies for inclusion, it is also important for them to have practical classroom strategies which they can share with their team members. How can a coach give dribbling advice to a team member if they have not kept up with the latest tips on ball handling? Therefore, it may be helpful to become familiar with a teacher's guide for inclusion, such as the companion guide to this material, *Ideas for Inclusion: The Classroom Teacher's Guide to Integrating Students With Severe Disabilities* (1994), or others referenced throughout this text.

. . . .

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Terminology

One of the greatest frustrations when talking (or writing) about inclusion is the proliferation of jargon used to describe it. Inclusion, and various related terms, brings to mind a wide variety of meaning for different people. Some of the most common terms and their various descriptions follow.

- **Mainstreaming**—An ERIC Digest article (1989) states that the term mainstreaming "implies regular classroom placement for all students with handicaps" (p.1). However, Simpson and Edwards (1980) write that "integral to the concept of mainstreaming is a continuum of service" (p.59). These conflicting definitions are good examples of confusion over the meaning of mainstreaming. Perhaps Biklen (1985) says it best when he writes "The term mainstreaming defies simple definition . . . to some it is a code word for 'dumping' . . . to others it means carefully integrating students with disabilities into regular schools and classes with appropriate support services and planning" (p.3).
- **Integration**—While Biklen, Lehr, Searl and Taylor (1987) define integration as "more comprehensive than mainstreaming" (p.11), Hanline and Murray (1984) write that "integration is not mainstreaming. Handicapped students who are integrated spend the majority of each school day in a special education classroom . . . " (p.274). To many, integration implies inclusion in only a few classes, primarily for social reasons. And finally, Forest and Lusthaus (1989) point out that the Random House College Dictionary defines integration as "the act or instance of combining into an integral whole" (p.44). Like the term "mainstreaming," the term "integration" clearly has multiple meanings.
- **Least Restrictive Environment** (LRE)—Although many people define LRE differently, it is the only one of these terms that has a legal definition. P.L. 94-142, and its reauthorization, P.L. 101-476, defines LRE as:

  > *. . . to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children . . . are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.*

- **Regular Education Initiative (REI)**—Wang (1988) writes that the REI concept "suggests that children with special needs could be best served if regular classroom teachers worked with special educators to learn strategies for teaching all students, all of the time" (p.36). Madeline Will drew public attention to this concept in 1986, when, as Assistant Secretary of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, she published an article calling for a move toward "shared responsibility" between general and special educators. The REI has caused much concern and confusion among special and regular educators over the last few years. Some see it as a move to disband special education completely, some see it as a means for federal deregulation, and others see it as another name for integration. However, the earliest descriptions appear to intend that the REI be simply a combination of best practices and encouragement of creativity and cooperation.

- **Inclusion**—One of the newest entries in the jargon of special education, "inclusion" is defined by NASBE (1992) as meaning that "students attend their home school with their age and grade peers . . . not isolated into special classes or wings with the school" (p. 12). When speaking with a group of parents and educators, Marsha Forest (personal communication, 1988) explained, "Integration truly has a much deeper meaning that's expressed in the terms 'inclusion' and 'belonging.'" Many parents and professionals are now using this term to describe full-time regular education environments for students with any type of disability. Others use the term inclusion to refer to a process or attitude that is fully accepting of all students.
- **Full Inclusion/Uncompromised Inclusion**—As the term "inclusion" gets watered down from its original full strength (all belong), some advocates are turning to these phrases to reinforce the message that inclusion is for all students, all the time (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994, p. 304).

Does the jargon jungle seem any more clear? If not, do not be dismayed, there does not seem to be any single definition for any of the words. The important thing is to be aware of the variety of meanings in use when discussing "inclusion" with colleagues and friends.

For the purposes of this book, the term "inclusion" will be used to refer to the huge variety of experiences in which students with and without disabilities are brought together.

. . . .

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Inclusion: Is It the Law?

This often asked question—"Is it the law?"—is a dangerous one. As the courts continue to struggle with defining the legal mandates related to inclusion, perhaps it is better to think of inclusion as a philosophical and moral mandate. After all, while laws may motivate some to follow, for the most part they are poor motivators. Educators are usually more motivated by their understanding of the humanistic rationale for inclusion. In addition, laws can be widely interpreted and even misinterpreted. Even experts on the law can argue endlessly for diametric points of view. However, educators do not have the time for this type of oratory. Finally, laws can change, causing a rollercoaster-type of dizziness for even the most flexible educator. Meanwhile, a strong philosophy of inclusion can be a constant to which people turn when making decisions and implementing programs.

As the question "Is it the law?" is bound to come up in your schools, it is worth knowing a few general conclusions from the vast body of applicable laws and court cases.

- The law clearly supports inclusion as **one** educational option for students with disabilities. However, inclusion is yet to be mandated as the **only** educational option for all students.
- When discussing student placements, the Planning and Placement Team must consider the general education classroom as the preferred learning environment. Only after considering this option, with the use of supplementary aids and services, should the team move on to discussions of special education environments.
- The burden of proof that inclusion is inappropriate usually falls to the school district. In addition, schools are expected to make more than token attempts at inclusion. Therefore, schools should be prepared to document and have a strong rationale for excluding a student from general education. Because of this, it is often more reasonable for a school district to attempt inclusion before determining that it will not work.

A brief description of the most relevant federal laws and cases follows, with a discussion regarding their implications for inclusion. For more thorough guidance, refer to the sources listed throughout the text and/or your school's legal counsel.

Brown v. State Board of Education (1954)—The United States Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that segregated education is inherently unequal and that such segregated education denies citizens their constitutional right to equal opportunity. While this case dealt primarily with the issue of racial desegregation, it is often touted as being the basis for inclusion of students with disabilities. It is referred to most often for its conclusive finding of inequality, rather than specific fine points of law.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)(1990), P.L. 101-476, (Reauthorization of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act [1975], P.L. 94-142)—This federal law forms the basis for most decisions regarding special education in the United States. Enacted in 1975, it includes provisions for free and appropriate education for all students with disabilities, organization of Planning and Placement Teams, design of Individual Education Plans and the concept of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). While this last item has the strongest connection to the inclusion movement, many other aspects of the law also provide support for inclusion. LRE is defined in the law as:

> *. . . to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children . . . are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.*

While this definition applies across a continuum of educational placement options, it is clear that the intent of Congress was different. As Osborne and Dimattia (1994) conclude: "The language of the IDEA suggests that Congress envisioned an educational system whereby all students, regardless of the severity of their disabilities, would be educated in an environment as close as possible to what is considered to be normal" (p.12).

In addition, Osborne and Dimattia (1994) report that recent court interpretations of the LRE mandate are finding in favor of inclusive settings for students, unless appropriate efforts on the part of the school district have been unable to bring about a successful educational experience. Courts look more favorably upon schools that have attempted inclusion in good faith. Therefore, it is critical that schools pay close attention to the latter half of the LRE definition: that students are entitled to appropriate supplementary aids and services to bring about successful inclusion.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (1973)—After many years of being in the background, this legislation is receiving a lot of attention in schools. Originally viewed as having primary impact in areas such as architectural modifications, Section 504 is now recognized as applying to instructional modifications as well.

Specifically, Section 504 requires schools which receive federal funds to make "reasonable accommodations" for any person whose disability "substantially limits" major life activities, such as learning. In addition, a person may be protected by Section 504 if they have a history of a substantial impairment (e.g., controlled drug addiction), or are seen by others as having such an impairment (e.g., facial disfigurement).

What does this mean for schools? Section 504 broadens the group of students who may be eligible for instructional modifications beyond those labeled "special education." Most of the students covered by Section 504, but not IDEA, are already included in general education classrooms, but may not have been allowed special accommodations such as untimed tests, preferred seating, or peer notetaking. If, however, a student is deemed eligible under Section 504, reasonable accommodations will need to be provided by the school.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) (ADA)—The ADA, in essence, simply extends the protections of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to public entities not receiving federal funds. Public schools are primarily regulated by Section 504, with some discrimination issues in employment expanded upon in ADA. However, the ADA has had an indirect impact on school inclusion. Because of the ADA, the public has become more aware and accepting of the rights of persons with disabilities to be fully participating members in all communities. This general sense of inclusion in the community has surely bolstered the push for inclusion in schools.

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CHAPTER

1

Leadership

At the last administrative meeting in your district, inclusion was an agenda item. Several of your colleagues wondered aloud whether inclusion was here to stay or would come and go like so many other education initiatives. Personally, you know that there are things that effective leaders can do to make initiatives, like inclusion, successful and enduring . . . .

Effective leadership is at the heart of successfully including all students in the life and community of your school. As a school administrator, you are the key agent in promoting excellence in schools, maintaining quality services and facilities for students, and creating change within your school to assure that the students are prepared for their future. All of these roles are necessary for successfully leading schools and are at the heart of making your school a successful place for students with and without disabilities to learn, together.

The attributes of effective leaders are also essential to accomplishing inclusive educational environments and practices which lead to success for all students. Leaders need to be:

- Driven by sound **principles** and **beliefs**.
- Guided by a **vision** for the future.

- Committed to **empowering** others to achieve greatness in students and schools through the management of human, material, and fiscal resources.
- Dedicated to **leadership by example**, or "walking the talk."

Principles and Beliefs

Using the four attributes outlined above, you, as a school administrator, can direct your school so all students, with or without disabilities, can be successful. Let us look at these key attributes in more detail as they relate specifically to including students with disabilities in schools.

Leadership begins with a set of **principles and beliefs** about students, learning, education, the school, the role of teachers and staff, and the role of families and community, to name a few. What a school or administrator believes about these, whether spoken or not, is reflected in how the administrator leads the school. Purposes, values, and beliefs need to be at the core of effective leadership, whether for schools (Sergiovanni, 1992) or other organizations (Oakley and Krug, 1991).

Among the key beliefs of leaders promoting inclusion are:

- **All students can learn.** This is not too different from the similar principle of Transformational Outcome Based Education being promoted by William Spady and colleagues of the High Success Network that, "All children can learn, not in the same way and not on the same day" (personal communication, 1993).
- **Students should learn from each other.** Collaborative efforts lead to improved problem solving, more efficient decision making, and an overall promotion of inclusion. The collaborative learning designs of Johnson and Johnson (1987) and Slavin (1990) back up this assertion. The belief that school is as much about social learning as it is about academic skill development, enhances inclusion. The role of social learning in the schools as a hidden curriculum or a stated one is not new to educators (Metz, 1978; Lipsitz, 1984).
- **Shared responsibility should be developed.** Developing cooperation can lead to a more positive community membership. Valuing the input and contributions of every member of a community in order to strengthen that community is embodied in this belief.

These key beliefs are just a sample of those that could be held by schools or administrators that would promote including students with disabilities, yet, at the same time, these principles are for the well being of **all** students. Take time to examine your belief system to identify those elements which might enhance inclusion and should be further developed into action, as well as those beliefs which might be unknowingly obstructing inclusion and should be reexamined as guiding beliefs in your role as administrator.

Vision

Through the examination of beliefs and principles, visions can be created in order to sharpen focus. These visions can then be used as a force which the educational leader can use to propel the school. Vision statements can be established which paint a picture of what you want your school to become. Vision statements that incorporate the aforementioned beliefs can give guidance in developing the picture of how you want your school to look and operate. The following concepts are examples compatible with the key beliefs and should be considered for promoting inclusionary schools:

- Language that speaks to the success of all students.
- Equity of programs and services.
- Accessible programs and services.
- A culture that emphasizes community, diversity, and an understanding and acceptance of differences.

Each of these examples set a positive tone for inclusion. Using one's beliefs, vision statements articulate the dream or future reality. The school administrators's actions speak louder than words. The remaining two attributes of an effective administrator (empowering others and leadership by example) advancing inclusion in the school are related to not **what** you think, but **how** you implement what you think.

Empowering Others

The educational leader needs to **empower** teachers and other staff to achieve great things for students. Site-based decision making is gaining popularity because it gives the frontline people the respect and support they need to do what they know how to do best—teach students. In schools where successful inclusion occurs, teachers have been allowed to try out new ideas, and have had their new ideas supported with human, material, and fiscal resources. These teachers have been supported by administrators who understand that the need to try and fail with an idea, is as important to successful creative ideas as those ideas which are enacted and eventually succeed.

Strategies to include a student with a disability are as individual as the students themselves. Yes, there are some guidelines for successful inclusion, but each situation needs to be individualized to the particular student. Just as each student is unique, so is each teacher. This uniqueness is reflected in the classroom. How often have you thought about student placements for the upcoming year and said, "Which teacher would be best for this child?" You recognize that each teacher creates unique learning environments because of who he or she is. And, just as no two teachers are alike, no two classes of students are ever alike. Every year you can hear, "I just can't do the same things with this class like I did with last year's class," or "Something was in the water the year this class was born," or "If every year could have been like this year . . . ." In addition, how often have teachers noted the differences among or between siblings if they have had several students from the same family over the years? No two students are alike. These three variables alone—individual teacher style, individual class personality, and individual student personality—make including a student with a disability into any educational environment a unique experience.

In order to identify the best strategies for an individual teacher, class, and student, trying, trying, and trying again needs to be encouraged and supported. To empower teachers to create new ideas, attempt something unique, or step outside the traditional norms. Administrators must make teachers feel their efforts will receive more than just verbal support, but that supplies or materials and staffing or planning time will also be provided. In addition to these supports, teachers need to possess the confidence that their failures will not be used against them or held up as "evidence" for poor teaching. An administrator can unleash unrealized possibilities through empowering faculty to take risks and "go for it." In Peters and Austin's book, *A Passion for Excellence* (1985), key requirements identified for innovation are to "nurture experimentation by celebrating 'good failures,' supporting persistence . . . " (p. 65). The vast majority of your faculty will rise to the occasion. The key to successfully including students with disabilities in typical education environments is often found in your teachers and support staff if you give them the permission and support they require.

Leadership by Example

The final attribute for administrators to be successful in including students with disabilities is to **lead by example** or "walk the talk." Wess Roberts humorously refers to this in his book, *Leadership Secrets of Attila the Hun* (1987). He relays that a chieftain cannot say one thing and do another. Your interactions with students with disabilities will reflect to students, faculty, and parents how you regard students with disabilities in your school community. When you are speaking with others, are students referred to as their disability (e.g., the mentally retarded, the remedial kids, or the "wheelchairs"?) Through speaking about the **student** with a learning disability, or the **students** who receive remedial services, people will first focus on the students themselves, then on what their needs may be. Eliminating the use of victimizing language assists people in seeing the individual and what makes them a part of the pool of students, rather than segregating them into a category that is separate or different than the pool of all students.

Leadership is tantamount to successfully promoting inclusion in schools. With **principles and beliefs** that support education for all, **visions** that paint a picture of beliefs in action, **empowerment** of staff to take risks, and through **leadership by example** you can transform your school into one that welcomes and serves all students who walk through its doors.

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1.1 Vision Setting

"Begin with the end in mind."

STEPHEN R. COVEY

Articulating beliefs and creating a vision is important for a leader who wants to create an educational environment conducive for integration or inclusion. This can be accomplished within your department, building, or at the district level. Through articulating a vision, specifically for the manner in which students with disabilities will be educated in your district, faculty and parents will feel more secure in communicating, lesson planning, collaborating, operating classrooms, generating rules and procedures, etc. And, as an administrator, you can more effectively carry out new instructional methods, supportive activities, staff development, and conduct teacher supervision and evaluation.

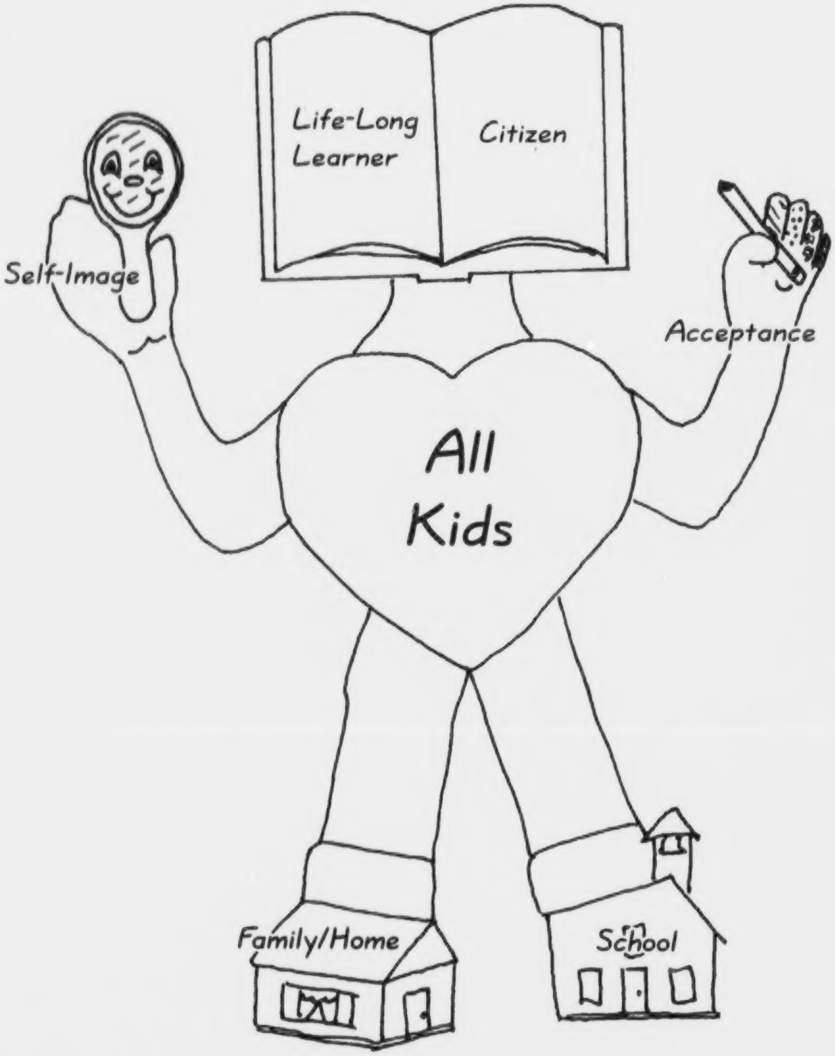
Step One—Organize a task force or representative group of multiple constituencies to participate in the process. The group may include parents, regular educators, special educators, administrators, and students with and without disabilities. The greater the variety of constituency groups, the greater the likelihood of widespread support of inclusion upon its adoption. The group should be a manageable size of 7-15 people.

Step Two—Engage the group in a discussion about how their school needs to progress with regard to meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Questions to solicit discussion may include: "Where should students with disabilities be taught?" "Who should be teaching them?" "What should they be taught?" "When should they learn certain things?" You can have the group participate in vision setting strategy such as the following: Have everyone close their eyes and image a school that educated all students with and without disabilities. What would it look like? Ask the same questions listed above to solicit discussion and help achieve an image. Another idea may include this activity: Pretend that your school district will be visited by a group of reporters that want to know all about how you provide an education to students with disabilities. What parts of your school would you take them to see and why? What would they see? What would you tell them? Who would you have them speak with and what would these people tell the reporters? Budnick and Weingart (personal communication, 1994) of EASTCONN Regional Educational Service Center in Hampton, Connecticut, have successfully utilized these vision setting strategies in assisting teams in developing vision statements.

Step Three—Record all of the responses from the strategies on index cards or self-stick notes. Lay out all of the index cards on a large table or self-stick notes on a piece of chart paper. Utilize a list reduction or silent group categorizing strategy to group like ideas. After categorizing, summarize each group with a statement that best conveys the ideas expressed in the comments.

Step Four—Write a paragraph which takes each descriptive sentence regarding the responses and combines them into two sections. One section should be a paragraph regarding what the group believes about educating students with disabilities; these should be statements of beliefs. The second section should be a coherent paragraph that paints a mental picture of what the school would look like educating students with disabilities. This is the vision statement. Some groups have utilized acronyms or graphic representations to represent their Vision and Belief Statement. The example below is from Prospect Street School in Terryville, Connecticut.

Vision


Life-Long Learner
Citizen
Self-Image
Acceptance
All Kids
Family/Home
School

"Through the collaboration of community, school, and family, all children will develop self-esteem, and become life-long learners and successful citizens."

Step Five—Have each group member reflect and comment on how the paragraph captures the beliefs and vision of the group regarding education for students with disabilities. Rewrite it until it captures the group's beliefs and vision so that all members of the group could support, or at the least agree not to undermine, the ideas put forth in the written statement.

Step Six—Share the Vision and Belief Statement with a select group or all members of the following constituency groups: other students; parents; faculty members at faculty, department, grade level meetings, or during class presentations; school improvement committees; PTO/PTA groups, curriculum committees, etc. Ask groups to provide feedback, comments or questions, feelings about the vision, concerns, and other items to be considered for inclusion or exclusion. Feedback can be written down on index cards and collected by the group.

Step Seven—Have the committee review and discuss each item of feedback. Categorize the items into those that should be considered for incorporation in the vision and those items that should not receive further consideration. Separate out any cards that are concerns or questions about the statement and hold for future action.

Step Eight—Rewrite the Vision and Belief Statement paragraph using both the original statement and the new ideas for consideration.

Step Nine—Discuss the concerns or questions cards that were submitted. Have the group respond to each item with rationale for their final position on the issue or question. If the group needs to add other beliefs which support the vision because these were not brought up through the questions or concerns, they should include these at this time and include them in the Vision and Belief Statement.

Step Ten—Submit the second draft for further comment to all groups of people who will be influenced by this document.

Step Eleven—Utilize this final round of feedback by discussing the concerns or questions that were submitted. Respond/react to each item and finalize a response. Incorporate your position/response into the final statement. Prepare a final draft of the Vision and Belief Statement.

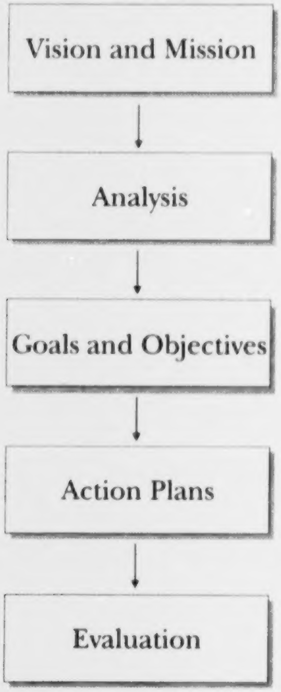
Step Twelve—Submit to all constituency groups. Explain that from this document future action plans will be developed to provide services for students with disabilities in your school (see Strategic Planning for Inclusion on page 18).

1.2 Strategic Planning for Inclusion

> *"Think how much more refreshing it would be to create tomorrow rather than extend yesterday."*
>
> JERRY PATTERSON

Inclusion, like all major initiatives, requires long-term as well as short-term planning. The necessary long-term planning is often accomplished through a strategic planning process. Strategic because it results in specific strategies that, when enacted, accomplish a broader mission. As Rigazzio-Digilio and Beninghof (1994) point out: "Districts need specific plans to resolve the conflict between the theoretical ideals of inclusive education and the pragmatic realities of today's classroom" (p. 81).

While there are several models for strategic planning (Burrello, 1990; Kaufman and Herman, 1991; Rigazzio-Digilio and Beninghof, 1994), they tend to have several factors in common. These similarities are represented below:



Prior to starting a strategic planning process for inclusion, take time to consider the following three factors:

- **Membership**—Most models recommend participation from a broad representation of stakeholders (interested parties). These individuals have a real interest in the outcome because of the risk they take as part of the change. Without their involvement from the beginning, the planning process can be so fraught with roadblocks and miscommunication that the desired outcomes cannot be achieved. Therefore, when doing strategic planning for inclusion, you may wish to have participants from each of the following groups:

- General Education Teachers (including a union representative)
- Special Education Teachers
- Paraeducators
- Related Services Personnel
- Parents
- Students
- Local Community
- Board of Education
- School Administration

- **Time**—Time poses two issues for you: (1) When to begin? and (2) How long will it take? First, strategic planning is meant to be a proactive process, completed in advance of major change. However, it can still be utilized as an improvement process after implementation has begun. Under these circumstances, educational leaders will need to be ready to deal with some confusion or frustration from participants who are already involved with implementation of the current model.

  The second issue regarding time is that effective strategic planning takes a lot of it! To rush the process is to do it an injustice. Administrators should be prepared to spend up to a year moving through the planning process before implementation begins and should prepare their participants for a large investment of time as well.

- **Control**—Whenever possible, it is helpful to arrange for a facilitator, other than someone with a vested interest, to guide the group through the strategic planning process. Although an outside consultant is often used, it is perfectly acceptable to obtain the services of someone inside the district. The main objective is to find someone who can facilitate the process, without having a personal agenda regarding the topic. The facilitator, then, has control over the **process**, but not control over the **topic** and **content**. Control over the topic and content of discussions is owned by the interested parties themselves.

Planning Phases

Once you are ready to start, you can organize your activity around the five basic phases of planning: Vision and Mission, Analysis, Goals and Objectives, Action Plans, and Evaluation.

Vision/Mission—These two terms are used interchangeably by some and used in complete contrast by others. The argument is almost comparable to the chicken or the egg—which came first? Generally, groups develop a vision first, followed by a mission. The vision articulates the group's feelings and beliefs about the broader issue of inclusion, while the mission provides more concrete descriptors of where the group is heading. As James Mapes (1991), a management consultant in Connecticut says, "A mission statement comes from the head; a vision comes from the heart" (p. 2). Whichever term you choose to use, the critical point is that you need a piece from the heart as well as a piece from the head; one inspirational and the other tactical (see Vision Setting on page 15).

Analysis—This phase is one of the easiest to overlook, but with dire results. If the group does not take the time to adequately analyze the needs of the stakeholders, the contextual issues (e.g., demographic trends, environmental barriers), and forecast for unexpected events, planning decisions may miss the intended target. As time is usually the reason for skimping on this phase, the school administrator can assist the group in saving time by identifying sources of data which are already available. In fact, a large quantity of useful data is already collected as part of state and federal reporting requirements (Shriner, Ysseldyke, Thurlow, and Honetschlager, 1994). In addition, you can work with central office administration to develop mechanisms for routine data collection. Finally, encourage the group members to become more tuned in, day in and day out, to internal and external forces which may effect their mission. As Poole (1991) writes, "After all, strategic planning is first and foremost a way of thinking . . . " (p.41).

Goals and Objectives—This phase of the planning process allows your group to become more and more concrete in their thinking. A grandiose vision begins to take on real shape, as goals communicate the major areas of effort and are followed by objectives which list specific actions. An example framework of goals and objectives for inclusion is outlined below.

Goals	1. To develop structured communication systems between regular educators, special educators, administrators, parents, students, and support services. 2. To provide time and resources for collaboration between team members. 3. To individualize curriculum to meet the needs of every student.
Objectives	1. Design a rotating schedule for all staff to have team planning time at least twice per month. 2. Design and implement a schedule for principals and assistant principals to teach a minimum of one class per week. 3. Develop and disseminate a booklet of suggestions for curriculum modification. 4. Develop and implement a staff inservice plan that addresses needs related to inclusion. 5. Review a sample of IEPs to evaluate the increase in the amount of time spent in general education and the quantity of curriculum modifications recommended.

Action Plan—The action plan serves as a necessary communication tool to insure follow through on the various strategies chosen by the team. An action plan may cover activities which span the next five years, or you may choose to use several different plans: a short-term, intermediate, and long-term plan. Whichever style you choose, it should be in the form of a concrete document: a flow chart, Pert chart, or other written format that designates who will do what and when they will do it. The **who**, **what** and, **when** will provide clear criteria by which the group can evaluate its progress. In addition, it will be clear to any individual participant who needs to review what they promised to implement.

Evaluation—Many school systems have a notorious reputation for trying new methods and materials without ever evaluating their effectiveness. Adoption of the "new" seems to rely more heavily on timing, personal preferences, and budget, than on documented student outcomes. To avoid this accusation regarding your inclusion efforts, it is critical to follow up your initial actions with evaluation activities. While these activities can take many forms, there are two key elements. The first is that data collection should come from many sources. To use just one or two simple sources will dangerously limit your view of actual progress. The second element is that evaluation should be formative rather than summative. As inclusion is a long-term change process, plan adaptations will need to be made throughout the course of implementation. To do this effectively you will need data at several points along the way.

The last thing to keep in mind is this: "Strategic planning is essential, but it is not sufficient to cause lasting changes in school districts" (Olson, 1991, p. 17). Implementation, with the right supports and commitment, is what truly brings about meaningful change for students. So do not let your strategic plans gather dust on the shelf!

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1.3 Climate Survey

"The house shows the owner."

GEORGE HERBERT

Developing an inclusionary environment in your school requires principal-centered leadership. Knowing what you want to accomplish and then going for it is important. Setting a climate for inclusion is one mechanism to bring about change in your school.

How does one go about setting a climate? A good place to begin is with the physical appearance of the school; this sets a tone that can be inviting or can put one off. It can say we are here for you or I do not have time for you. When it comes to inclusion, your school tone can project that all are welcome, some are welcome, or people with disabilities are not welcome. The following is an ecological survey to complete at your school to help focus on climate issues, that when addressed with a belief that all are welcome, will begin to make people feel precisely that. Under each category are questions to ask about your physical space. How you answer these questions will help you identify your current climate and may lead to developing a physical space more conducive to inclusion.

Physical Space—Are doorways passable for wheelchairs? Are classrooms designed to allow for wheelchair passage in quiet time space, peer tutoring sessions, or small group work sessions? Can students in wheelchairs use the water fountain? Are braille plaques or picture cards available at each written sign? Are parts of the building not available to some students because stairs or other obstacles keep students in wheelchairs from freely moving about? Do students with disabilities have to enter and leave the building in separate locations than others because of convenience for buses, traffic flow, or people without disabilities' convenience?

Wall Coverings—Are walls conducive to noise reduction? Do signs invite people to enter or do they put up barriers to their comfort? Are there greeters that invite a visitor in and direct accordingly versus signs that say all visitors must sign in at the office and wear a visitor's badge?

Floor Coverings—Can wheelchairs or crutches move easily and safely across spaces? Are floor coverings conducive to noise reduction?

Auditory Systems—Are TDDs, interpreters for meetings, and audible "signs" available?

Written Systems—Are written signs accompanied with braille or picture code equivalents?

Language Usage—Are faculty referred to by disability code (e.g., the "LD teacher" rather than "teacher" or other more generic titles)? Are classrooms identified generically (e.g., the "resource room" or "learning lab," rather than the "special education class")? Are students referred to as "the retarded," "speds," "the 504's," "the SEMS," or other names designating their disability rather than people first language such as "students with learning disabilities" or "students experiencing emotional difficulties"?

Curricula Content—Does curriculum infuse disability sensitivity into content examples? Examples of such sensitivity could be a story that happens to have a student in a wheelchair as one of the characters, a math lesson about circumference which utilizes the spokes on a wheelchair as a concrete example, or a science lesson on chromosomes which includes a discussion of Down Syndrome or 18q Syndrome as examples of the influence of chromosomes on physical development.

Extracurricular Content—Are sports events conducive to including students with disabilities? Is Special Olympics a recognized school sport with a coach? Is there a Diversity Sensitivity Club that addresses disability as well as the more typically addressed ethnic and gender issues?

Instructional Methodology—Do instructional methods vary within a lesson or unit in order to address multiple learning styles? Are cooperative learning, peer tutoring, exploration or discovery learning, computer technology use, heterogeneous grouping, cross-age/grade/ability grouping or tutoring, and hands-on activities all frequently and routinely included in the instructional process?

Furniture—Do chairs fit the tables and desks? Can wheelchairs fit at desks, tables, and other areas where students are working? Are floor seating arrangements available for students with disabilities when the class is on the floor so the student does not have to remain in a wheelchair?

Bathroom—Are bathrooms designed for people in wheelchairs? Are other students allowed to utilize these bathrooms and specialized equipment to reduce fear and stigma of the different?

Equipment—Can all students utilize specialized equipment to help minimize fear or stigma of the unknown? Do students without disabilities have the opportunity to learn about the purpose of the specialized equipment?

Employees—Are only certain employees allowed to push wheelchairs or respond to specific students in classrooms or are all encouraged and trained to handle a wide variety of different equipment, methods, and interventions? Do only special education teachers respond to the needs of special education students or do all faculty try to address these students' issues? Are special education teachers called on to do everything for a special education student when others are quite capable of answering the question or addressing the need?

Several organizations have checklists or inventories that schools can use to help assess the degree of inclusion that the school has achieved. The following are several inventories available: the Connecticut Developmental Disabilities Planning Council's *Test Your School's Integration Quotient*; the University of Minnesota's *Integration Checklist*; or Luanna Meyer's (1992) *Program Quality Indicators*. Also see Indicators of Successful Inclusive Schools on page 55.

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1.4 Staff Development

> *"If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got."*
>
> UNKNOWN

A paradigm shift in staff development is slowly taking place (Sparks, 1994). Gone is the reliance on inservice workshops as the sole means for developing teacher skills and knowledge. In its place is a recognition that educators need a variety of activities to enhance their professional abilities. Schools are now offering activities that allow teachers time to reflect, practice, and receive feedback, while never losing sight of student outcomes.

The timing of this shift benefits the inclusive school in several ways. First, it models the importance of approaching learners as individuals with unique needs. Just as teachers need choices and variety in learning activities, so do students. Second, it gives the school administrator a greater variety of tools with which to encourage and support staff during their transition to inclusion. Options can include study groups, research projects, reading clubs, visitations, writing for a publication, curriculum development, networking with colleagues, peer coaching, and video- and computer-based learning. Third, it encourages teachers to work more closely with their colleagues, thereby modeling the collaboration they expect from their students.

How can you determine the best type of staff development activity for an individual or group of people? With regard to inclusion, Mary Budrawich, early childhood specialist (personal communication, 1993), recommends following the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) developed by Hall, Wallace, and Dossett (1973). CBAM proposes that people differ tremendously in their readiness to accept major changes, such as inclusion. As they become ready, they move through various stages. The following are the CBAM stages:

Stage 0/Awareness—Very low level of involvement. This is the staff member who acts as if he or she has not even heard the word "inclusion."

Stage 1/Informational—General awareness and interest, but still relatively uninvolved. This is the staff member who realizes that something to do with inclusion is going on in the building or district, but does not believe it will affect him or her.

Stage 2/Personal—Begins to consider the impact of innovation on themselves. This is the staff member who is beginning to worry that he or she may be asked to include students with disabilities in his or her classroom.

Stage 3/Management—Concern focuses on efficient and effective methodologies. This is the staff member who has been given a class list that includes several students with disabilities and now is desperate to find out what to do.

Stage 4/Consequence—Attention to student outcomes and accountability. This is the staff member who, after including students for a short period, begins to raise questions of outcome, fairness, progress, evaluation, and/or success.

Stage 5/Collaboration—Focus on working with others and involved with change. This is the staff member who recognizes that colleagues, especially those with inclusion experience, may be able to help.

Stage 6/Refocusing—Interest in refinement, improvement, and innovation. This is the staff member who, with some successful experience behind them, is ready to make the situation even better.

By using this model, we can identify various staff development activities for promoting inclusion, no matter how ready an individual may be. The chart on page 26 provides examples of such activities.

Staff Development Stages

Stage	Activity
Awareness	• Brief "overview" workshop • Awareness-level videotape, such as *Regular Lives* (1988) • Ongoing updates at faculty meetings • Brief professional or newspaper articles on inclusion
Informational	• Full-day workshops on general inclusion issues • Presentations by parents of students with disabilities • Brief presentations by practitioners of inclusion • Brief professional or newspaper articles on inclusion
Personal	• Group discussions around certain issues • Presentation with questions and answers from practitioners of inclusion • Conference attendance • Reading and discussion groups • Visitations to inclusive classrooms
Management	• Practical books and articles • Problem solving sessions with a group or consultant • Videos showing practical strategies such as, *Facing Inclusion Together Through Collaboration and Co-Teaching* (1993) • Visits to inclusive classrooms with opportunities for dialogue with teacher • Library/resource investigation
Consequence	• Research articles on outcomes • Discussion with colleagues about outcomes • Research projects within own settings • Highly focused skill-building workshops • Study groups • Videotaping with self-analysis
Collaboration	• Problem solving meetings • Peer coaching • Staff meeting updates • Curriculum development committees
Refocusing	• Reading club • Peer coaching • Conferences • Presenting own experiences to others • Discussions with advocates for inclusion • Independent study plans

In addition, experience has shown that the following development activities are very powerful means for encouraging commitment to inclusion.

- **Visitations**—Visiting and observing classrooms where successful inclusion is taking place can bring about a dramatic change in a reluctant or nervous teacher. The old adage "seeing is believing" proves true over and over. However, to make the most of this type of activity, keep three things in mind:

1. Visitations are most effective when they are guided by an individual familiar with inclusion. This person can point out critical features, explain techniques, and answer questions.
2. No matter which site is chosen for a visit, it will never be exactly like the situation at your school. This should be acknowledged openly before the visit, so that staff do not get caught up with sentiments such as, ". . . but my student is more disabled." or ". . . but they have more resources than we do."
3. Often, visits can serve to affirm the positive things already taking place at your school. Teachers will never find "the perfect place" to visit, so it is worth recognizing the strengths and weakness of a program. Staff may walk away from a visit feeling better about their current efforts in light of what they have seen.

- **Out-of-District Conferences** — While there may be some highly knowledgeable staff within your school or district, it often helps to hear from outsiders. Going to an out-of-district conference can give staff an opportunity to learn about successful inclusion in other schools and to discover that inclusion is not just an invention of their local special education director! In addition, it can be rather inspiring to see and hear hundreds of people talking about inclusion. To make the most of these conferences, be sure to encourage general and special educators to attend together.
- **Parent Speakers**—Parents can bring a perspective on inclusion that is difficult to ignore. A teacher may be able to tune out a university lecturer, special education director, or colleague, but can be very moved by a parent who is an effective speaker. Parents are able to share from the heart, to describe the urgency and necessity of inclusion, and to plead for acceptance and support. However, when using this strategy, be sure to keep two things in mind:

1. Not all parents are effective speakers. A poor speaker—parent or professional—can kill enthusiasm for a concept. Inquire into local advocacy groups and other schools to find someone who can be interesting and compelling.
2. Using a parent from outside the local school community is best. Often these parents have greater credibility with an audience. No one knows their "war stories" or can comment upon how "unrealistic" the parent is, etc. Once again, check with your local advocacy groups or educators knowledgeable about inclusion for recommendations.

By the following these guidelines, an educational leader has the opportunity to offer staff and students a positive learning environment.

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CHAPTER

2

Planning Processes

You've just received a phone call from Mrs. Carlos who is moving into your school's catchment area. She has a nine year old son who happens to have Down Syndrome. The parent has informed you that although her son has been served in a segregated setting in her old community, she is now determined that he be included in a regular classroom. She would like to meet with you to discuss how you will go about planning for his program.

Planning for inclusion is a multifaceted effort. It can include planning for the inclusion of a new student, planning for school- or district-wide movement toward more inclusive practices, planning for staff development and supportive activities, planning for use of personnel, etc. Whichever phase of planning you are in, short- or long-term, there are several key factors to consider.

The most critical factor is a belief by those involved that **time spent in proactive planning is time well spent**. At a workshop on at-risk students, Anita DeBoer (Personal Communication, 1989) said, "You can spend a few intense weeks trying to solve a problem or you can spend nine months being miserable." This sentiment holds true in all phases of planning. Whether this is a district-wide plan that takes a year to develop and several years to implement, or a team meeting which takes several hours to adequately identify and address a student's needs, time spent now will save time later. For instance, meeting with Mrs. Carlos as soon as possible will help you to avoid potential problems later. While most of us can intellectually accept this, the ability to find the time and systematically develop a plan can be difficult. The strategies presented in this chapter will make this process easier.

Once the commitment to planning is present, a **systematic process** will help to ensure success. Systematic processes may include flow charts, checklists, or simply a listing of specific steps to be followed. Several different examples are provided in the following pages. Whichever system you use, the key point is that the steps are clearly communicated to everyone involved, preferably in writing. A written plan is one small insurance against miscommunication and confusion. In addition, it is evidence of your efforts, something which can be of comfort to parents and staff.

Who should be involved in the planning process? Experience shows us that for most planning to be successful, it should **include the input of the various stakeholder groups** (Burrello, 1989). Webster's (1989) defines stakeholder as "a person entrusted with the stakes of bettors" (p. 1147). This definition portrays the understanding that many people will feel that their interests are at risk in this new educational venture. For a school-wide plan, the stakeholders would probably include teachers, support personnel, building support staff, parents, administrators, union representatives, paraeducators, etc. For an individual student plan, anyone with implementation responsibilities, such as specialists, paraeducators, peers, parents, and classroom teachers should be involved in planning. The last group—classroom teachers—is particularly critical. For inclusion to become a reality, it must have the full commitment of general educators. By involving as many of the stakeholders as possible, you are encouraging shared ownership for the outcomes of the plan, right from the beginning. In addition, each of these stakeholders brings a unique perspective to the planning and can help to identify challenges and solutions that others may not have even considered. This, too, is a small piece of insurance for success.

Once you have the right group together and a process to follow, be sure to build in **flexibility**. A key factor in the practical application of a plan, flexibility can be established through a number of methods. For example, timelines can include the actual time when something will be done, rather than a single date. Activities designed to reach an objective can include a variety of agreed upon options so that if one approach does not succeed, other approaches are available without having to go back to the planning group. In addition, follow up planning meetings should be scheduled regularly. Unfortunately, in many schools there seems to be an unwritten law that the Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting is only held once a year, even if it would be best to hold an interim meeting. The principal can make team members aware of their ability to call a mid-year IEP meeting if necessary. In cases such as Mrs. Carlos', several meetings might be necessary in the first few months of the school year. Finally, new ideas or programs are often more readily accepted by resistant staff if it is clear that a trial period is acceptable. Commitment to "forever" is much harder to achieve than to "for a week."

As Stephen Covey (1989) explains, "Begin with the end in mind" (p. 99). As in the construction of a new home, details are created and noted in a blueprint before the first nail is ever hammered into place; other details are added as the project moves along. Taking this same approach with proactive planning for inclusion can lead to an educational environment as nurturing and comfortable as a well built home.

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2.1 Transition Checklist

"A stitch in time saves nine"

ANONYMOUS

Students with disabilities often experience more change in their lives than those without disabilities. They enter and exit many relationships with service providers. They also have a greater number of hospital, respite, and foster care stays than students without disabilities. And now, many students with disabilities are experiencing major changes in the way their educational programs are run. Students are being moved from self-contained classes or schools to full-time general education classrooms.

Like all students, some students with disabilities respond well to change, while others have difficulty adapting. With a move toward a more inclusive instructional setting, it becomes the responsibility of the educational team to make change happen as smoothly as possible in order for students to receive the maximum benefit from their educational experience (O'Shea, 1994).

With this in mind, the Transition Checklist on page 32 (Beninghof, 1991) was designed to aid the organization and follow through of all activities related to the successful transition of a student from one educational placement to another. In order to be applicable to a variety of situations, the checklist covers activities related to moving from residential schools, special day schools, or from one program to another within a school. By using this document, a team can organize a plan for an individual student, either well in advance of the actual program change, or as a priority checklist for an unexpected transition. The checklist also serves as a communication tool between team members, clearly documenting activities, timelines, and responsibilities.

When using the checklist, you may find certain items that could be modified to better suit the needs of your school or district. You may also wish to keep note of any additional steps you take in your transition process so that these steps can be added to a future plan for another student. In addition, the authors would love to hear about any new ideas regarding the Transition Checklist.

Transition Checklist

	Activities	***Timelines***	***Person(s) Responsible***
1. The Planning and Placement Team (PPT) designs IEP objectives for the student. The PPT then determines that the student is ready for a transition to a less restrictive placement.			
2. The PPT recommends the specific placement (type of service and location).			
3. Determine if a change in living arrangements must also be planned/pursued.			
4. Assess the new instructional classroom/school environment and the student's strengths and needs, with particular attention to skills that will enhance inclusion.			
5. Determine when and how the student will be informed of the new placement.			
6. Begin providing instruction to the student in areas which will assist him or her with the transition to the new placement.			
7. Identify the staff who will be involved with the student.			
8. Assess each staff person's training needs in relation to transitioning and including the student.			
9. Provide necessary training to staff.			
10. Send new staff to visit the student in his or her current placement.			
11. Arrange for staff and parent(s) to visit new placement.			
12. Arrange for student to visit new placement one or more times.			
13. Provide opportunities for new and current staff to meet to discuss the student.			
14. Establish a weekly schedule for the student that addresses IEP objectives in the most inclusive context possible.			
15. Consider activities to sensitize and inform students without disabilities.			
16. Inform parents, PTA, and community of general inclusion activities.			

	Activities	***Timelines***	***Person(s) Responsible***
17. Modify curricula and evaluation procedures as necessary.			
18. Arrange for any necessary modifications to physical plant or equipment.			
19. Arrange for transportation, utilizing a regular school bus whenever possible.			
20. Coordinate any related services for the new placement.			
21. Set up a communication system between necessary parties (e.g., home-school, current-new teachers.)			
22. Transfer appropriate student records.			
23. Address any changes in, or needs for, medical services due to the transition.			
24. Develop plans for fire evacuation, substitute coverage, or other emergency situations.			
25. Move student to the new placement (full- or part-time based on student's needs.)			
26. Develop peer supports (e.g., peer tutors, Circle of Friends).			
27. Identify support activities for family and siblings if necessary.			
28. Establish a follow up, problem solving team of staff and parents.			
29. Monitor student's progress on IEP objectives and make modifications as necessary.			

(Note: The activities listed are not necessarily in chronological order.)

Reprinted with permission by Beninghof, A.M. (1991). *Transitions to least restrictive environments.* Hartford, CT: Capitol Region Education Council.

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Beninghof, A.M. (1991). *Transitions to least restrictive environments.* Hartford, CT: Capitol Region Education Council.

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2.2 MAPS

> *"Failing to plan is a plan to fail."*
>
> EFFIE JONES

Have you ever found yourself so focused on something you are doing that you have lost sight of the bigger picture? Because this is such a common phenomenon, in education as well as elsewhere, MAPS is a wonderful tool to become familiar with. MAPS (rarely referred to as its full name of McGill Action Planning System), is a process developed by Lusthaus and Forest (1987) to develop long range plans for students with disabilities. Like a map, the process allows you to look at where you are, but more importantly, where you want to go. It differs significantly from the typical Planning and Placement Team Process for developing student plans in several important ways:

- MAPS de-emphasizes standardized test scores as a way to describe a student.
- MAPS asks questions that solicit long range, in depth thinking about an individual.
- MAPS uses graphics and color to aid in representing and generating ideas.
- MAPS does not specifically focus on weaknesses and deficits of a student.
- MAPS involves a broader group of participants in planning.

Because of its differences, MAPS may be uncomfortable for some participants. It is a more free-flowing, emotional discussion than a traditional IEP meeting. However, the authors' experiences have shown that groups involved in the MAPS process find it enlightening and beneficial to themselves as well as the student.

To begin a MAP, you should have the parent(s') full awareness of the process as well as their permission to proceed. Because the process can be very intimate and emotional, it is critical that the parent(s) are comfortable and ready to participate. Once you have permission, you should then invite teachers, related professionals, support personnel, student peers, and any one significantly involved in the student's life. Your MAPS group may have anywhere from 5-25 people involved, depending upon the individual. However, MAPS groups typically include about ten participants.

A facilitator leads the group through responses to each of the six MAPS questions (see page 35), writing answers and comments on displayed chart paper. Through the use of colored markers and simple graphics, the ideas are represented in a clear, yet creative form, to encourage a multidimensional view of the student. Finally, after all thoughts have been recorded and the questions addressed, the group grapples with designing IEP objectives and a daily schedule that meet the student's needs.

*MAPS Questions**

1. Who is _______?

   With this question comes the opportunity to share whatever words and phrases come to mind when thinking of the student. These thoughts may include positive, as well as not so positive, comments (e.g., "independent" and "stubborn"). This question is not intended to elicit educational jargon, labels, or test scores.

2. What is ________ 's history?

   When teams have an understanding of the student's and family's history, it is usually easier to understand their dreams and nightmares regarding their child. The facilitator usually prompts the parent(s) to provide most of the comments in response to this question. Common points include past educational experiences, medical experiences, and family/daycare issues of relevance.

3. What are ________'s strengths and interests?

   At this time, team members can share their feelings and knowledge about the student's talents and strengths. In addition, it is important to note favorite activities, people, etc., in order that the educational program can incorporate the student's preferences.

4. What are your dreams for __________?

   Parents are usually the first to contribute answers to this question, but all participants are encouraged to share their dreams for the student. The facilitator may need to ask some probing questions in order to help some participants to "stretch" their perspectives.

5. What are your nightmares concerning __________?

   This question is the most uncommon of the six questions, so it may take a few extra moments of thought before participants are ready to answer. It may also elicit the most emotional responses as participants begin to share their deepest fears for the student. Common responses include issues of loneliness, unemployment, and exploitation.

6. What are _________'s needs?

   This is the time to begin to look at the needs of the student in order to bridge the gap between the dreams and the nightmares. These needs may be broad or narrow at this point, eventually leading to the development of specific, short-term objectives.

---

* Adapted from Lusthaus, E. & Forest, M. (1987). The kaleidoscope: A challenge to the cascade. In M. Forest (Ed.), *More education integration* (pp. 1-17). Downsview, Ontario: G. Allan Roeher Institute.

The following excerpts form a MAP that will provide a sample of the type of responses you can expect.

1. Who is Rachel?

bright

independent/stubborn

great smile

loves music

small–tiny–peanut

Go. Go. Go!

energetic

shy around strangers

whines

impatient

2. What is Rachel's history?

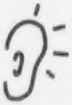
mom had premature labor (five months)

drugs to maintain mom's pregnancy

born three weeks early

jaundice, extra hospital time

constant ear infections



"tubes"

heart murmur

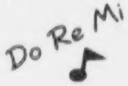
"Giant Steps"

daycare so mom and dad could work–same place whole time

typical childhood illnesses

3. What are Rachel's strengths and interests?

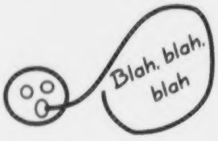
loves to sing

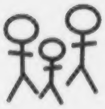


loves animals

good at imitating

talks a lot!

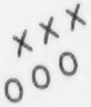




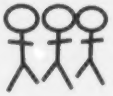
loving family

long attention span for books

affectionate



4. What are your dreams for Rachel?



friendships

musical talent for hobby or work

love of books

to be loved and love

for people to like her

attend college program

to be healthy

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5. What are your nightmares concerning Rachel?

teen pregnancy

abuse–physical or emotional

kidnapping

that she'll become a "terror"

loneliness

sick all the time

6. What are Rachel's needs?

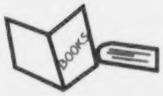
self-protection skills

friendship skills

hobbies–music lessons?

discipline–appropriate behavior

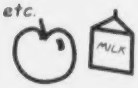
choices A, B, or C?



academic stimulation

learning to read

basic health care–nutrition, hygiene, etc.



In order to ensure successful MAPS, consider the following recommendations:

- An effective MAPS meeting takes approximately two hours and can last even longer. Be sure that participants are prepared ahead of time regarding their time commitment.
- The MAPS facilitator should be someone who can effectively, yet sensitively, keep the discussion on track. For your first MAP, it may be best to solicit assistance from a facilitator who has previous experience with MAPS.
- It may be helpful to provide reading material concerning MAPS to all participants ahead of time. In depth training is not necessary.
- If younger students participate in the MAPS discussion, you will need to use your best judgment about adjusting the questions or parameters of discussion. Some groups have had great success with students as young as nine, while other groups have chosen to have a separate, condensed discussion with younger students.

By following these recommendations, the MAPS process can help your team plan a successful, inclusive program for any student at your school.

. . . .

References

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2.3 Expanding the Pre-Referral Problem Solving Process

> *"We need teams of professionals in the business of inventing new practices."*
>
> TOM SKRTIC

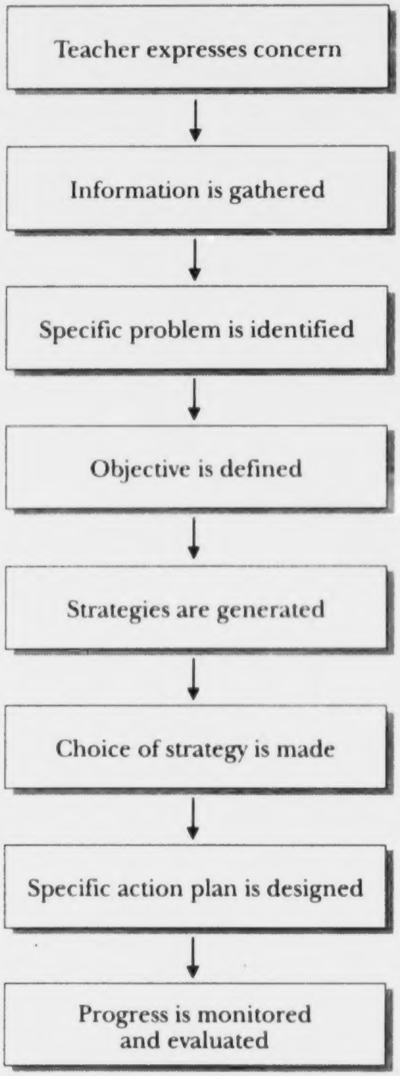
Most schools have some type of system in place for discussing students who are considered at-risk for special education. These are the students who demonstrate significant difficulties with academics or behavior and are not responding to the teacher's usual repertoire of strategies. The pre-referral process for these students usually involves a team of specialists who listen to the teacher's concerns, perform several evaluations, and then determine if a student is eligible for special services.

How does the topic of pre-referral problem solving fit into an examination of inclusive educational practices? First, an effective pre-referral system can lead to strategies for maintaining a student with special needs in the general education setting rather than separating the student. Second, an effective system can encourage a sense of joint ownership between general and special education for students experiencing difficulties. Third, the problem solving can be expanded to assist students that are not at the pre-referral level; that is, students who have been found ineligible for special education, students who are currently receiving special education, and students who need a temporary support system but would never be considered for special education. All of these students, along with their teachers, require a means for finding solutions to their academic and behavioral challenges.

Several models for pre-referral systems and problem solving have been delineated (Beck, 1991; Chalfant and Pysch, 1979; Shinsky, 1990; West, Idol, and Cannon, 1989). In general, they have these following recommendations in common:

- Problem solving teams should be comprised primarily of general educators. Teams made up predominantly of specialists typically have greater difficulty providing practical classroom strategies for teachers, and therefore have less credibility with teachers as an effective problem solving group. In addition, specialists have usually been trained in a deficit model (i.e., students have weaknesses, so test to diagnose them and then remediate in isolation). On the other hand, general educators have a wealth of practical strategies to share with colleagues and are often seen as more approachable. Having general educators on the team empowers the classroom teacher to feel capable of this shared responsibility.
- Sufficient time must be spent in the information gathering stages if a problem is going to be adequately addressed. Too often, educators skim through the data collection and analysis phase and jump directly to "let's generate some solutions." The problem with this, of course, is that many times the "solutions" fail because they do not relate to the actual problem. Success is much more likely when the problem has been accurately identified.

- Steps in the problem solving process usually include:


Teacher expresses concern
Information is gathered
Specific problem is identified
Objective is defined
Strategies are generated
Choice of strategy is made
Specific action plan is designed
Progress is monitored and evaluated

Teacher expresses concerns—Although the special educator may have some concerns to bring to the team, it is crucial that the general educator see the student with a disability as one of their students. Therefore, it is helpful to encourage the classroom teacher to take the lead in presenting the concern.

Information is gathered—Information gathering for inclusion takes on a new twist. It does not focus on the traditional standardized assessment tools, but instead relies heavily on curriculum-based assessments, ecological assessments, observations in context, and interviews. While teachers often feel that they have a clear enough sense of what is happening with a student to "just explain," it is usually wise to have a look at concrete examples or data collected in an objective manner.

Specific problem is identified—It is almost impossible to solve the problem of disruptive behavior. However, it is very possible to address the common problems of being out of seat, calling out, or inappropriately touching others. The more broadly a situation is described, the more difficult it is to find an effective strategy. Due to this, it is necessary that the teacher, with assistance from the team, define the problem as specifically as possible, in order that effective ideas are generated and progress is evaluated.

Objective is defined—Once the problem has been narrowed, it should be turned into an objective that has measurable criteria. If these criteria are not set at the beginning stages of problem solving, it will be impossible to objectively judge whether enough progress has been made to satisfy the team. For example, "Sean will keep his hands to himself." is less effective than "Sean will keep his hands to himself, with only one incident per week of inappropriate touching."

Strategies are generated—Brainstorming is the most effective method for generating a large number of strategies for the teacher. However, if brainstorming is done incorrectly, the team can thwart the creative flow of ideas (Beninghof, 1994). Guidelines should be set which prohibit judgmental comments of any kind, either positive or negative, until after the brainstorming period. Teams should be reminded of these guidelines immediately before brainstorming and throughout the period if necessary.

Choice of strategy is made—In inclusive settings, it is usually wise to allow the classroom teacher to choose the strategy they would like to implement. In so doing, you are encouraging their responsibility toward the student while respecting the teacher's needs and style. If necessary, specialists can speak up to voice opinions or reflections, but should allow the teacher the final choice.

Specific action plan is designed—Who? What? When? Where? These are the basic questions that need to be answered in an action plan. Whether you use a form or a blank piece of paper, it is critical to have the answers to these questions written down. A written plan will alleviate miscommunication, avoidance of responsibility, and forgetfulness. The form on page 43 was designed by a problem solving team at the Maple Street School in Vernon, Connecticut.

Request for Assistance Form (Sample)

Student Name Harold Hyper **Teacher** Betty Bonkers **Date** 10/5

Grade 2 **D.O.B.** 3/10 **Date Parent Contact** 10/1

Dates and times available for conferencing 1. Mon. 9:30 **2.** Tues. after school **3.** Fri. lunch

Concerns:

Harold is not retaining reading vocabulary; he is below grade level in writing; he seldom finishes work, often forgets directions, and has difficulty staying on task.

Case Partner Sally Sincere

To be completed with case partner.

Student Strengths:

Harold has strong oral language abilities; he is creative; in math he creates intricate patterns.

Positive Reinforcers:

- computer
- finished work
- praise
- play with Legos

Data needed (CBA, OBA, student's work, etc.):

Observation of amount of time on task, informal reading inventory, writing samples.

Objectives, timelines:

Harold will increase the amount of morning/reading work completed from 50% to 80% in three weeks.

Brainstorming ideas:

- listen to relaxing music
- use a timer
- allow Harold to take a break (timed) after each completed paper
- allow Harold to play with Legos
- computer time as a reward for completed work
- color coding
- peer buddy to reiterate directions
- video tape of himself
- draw lines on assignment paper to show where to begin and end

Initial Strategies:

Use of a timer, peer "buddy" to tell Harold directions, Betty will implement strategies. Sally will provide timer. Try for three weeks.

Parent/Home Involvement:

Harold's mother informed of strategies. She will try to read to him more often.

Follow-up meeting date 10/26

Minutes:

(On 10/26 Betty and Sally formally met concerning Harold)
Harold has slightly increased his amount of completed work from 50% to 65%. Betty would like to see more improvement. This case will be referred to the team for additional ideas.

Adapted from: Maple Street School, Vernon, Connecticut.

Request for Assistance Form

Student Name________________________________ Teacher________________________________ Date__________

Grade______________ D.O.B.______________ Date Parent Contact______________

Dates and times available for conferencing 1. ______________ 2. ______________ 3. ______________

Concerns:

Case Partner____

To be completed with case partner.

Student Strengths:

Positive Reinforcers:

Data needed (CBA, OBA, student's work, etc.):

Objectives, timelines:

Brainstorming ideas:

Initial Strategies:

Parent/Home Involvement:

Follow-up meeting date______________

Minutes:

Adapted from: Maple Street School, Vernon, Connecticut.

Progress is monitored and evaluated—Follow through is often the most difficult step. It is too easy to simply say "it's not working" without collecting objective data that reflects what is actually happening. However, follow up data is critical if we are concerned about actual outcomes. Not only can this data confirm or rebut an individual's subjective opinion, it can also be used to illustrate outcomes to parents and other concerned parties. In addition, it allows involved school personnel to adjust methods to improve outcomes for students.*

By following these recommendations, your assistance team can become an integral factor in school-wide support of inclusion for all students.

References

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Shinsky, E. (1990). *Techniques for including students with disabilities: A step-by-step practical guide for school principals.* Lansing, MI: Shinsky Seminars.

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2.4 Planning Matrixes

"Don't be afraid of the space between your dreams and your reality. If you can dream it, you can make it so."

BELVA DAVIS

Once a student's IEP objectives have been designed, the team must find a way to address these objectives within the context of general education environments. One of the simplest ways to visualize a student's schedule is through a planning matrix. Various models have been proposed (Rainforth, York, and MacDonald, 1992; Falvey, Coots, Bishop, and Grenot-Scheyer, 1989), but for the most part they have three things in common:

- A list of the student's IEP objectives.
- A list of the typical classes or environments for the same age peers.
- A system for indicating necessary modifications or supports.

Planning matrixes provide many benefits. For classroom teachers matrixes provide a clearer understanding of why particular students are in their classrooms, what the instructional objectives are, and what responsibilities they have. For the team, the matrix provides an overall picture of the student's program, allowing for an easy check that all objectives are being addressed throughout the course of the day as well as highlighting the periods in which the student will need modifications or other supports. Matrixes also lead to increased accountability by helping everyone be more clear about who is supposed to be doing what, when. The following is one model, developed with educators in Bristol, Connecticut, which has been used successfully in inclusive settings (Beninghof, 1994).

Completing the Planning Matrix

Keep in mind as you use this form that it is meant to be a guideline for the student's day, rather than an inflexible schedule. It is expected that there will be changes based upon student and staff variables, special events, etc. However, when designing it, try to do so with a typical day in mind. (See the sample planning matrix on page 48 when following these directions.)

1. List the IEP objectives in the left hand column.
2. Across the top row of boxes, list the separate activities or periods of the regular school day, including arrival, lunch, recess, study hall, "specials," or any other normal parts of the school routine. These periods do not need to be in exact chronological order, as some activities change from day to day.
3. As a team, look at the first IEP objective. Going across the row, decide in which activity, activities, or period(s) the objective could be addressed. Under those headings, shade the corresponding box with a highlighter or pencil. Continue this procedure for each of the objectives until finished. This will provide you with a picture of all the times throughout the day when the objective could be addressed.

4. Returning to the first objective (first row) decide in which shaded period(s) the objective will receive direct instruction. This is the designated time when specific attention will be paid to ensure that the skill is learned. Write a X in these boxes.

5. In the bottom row, for each period, decide whether the student will be:
   a. Working in this period in basically the same way every other student is, with no significant modifications required. If so, write an **'S'** for Same in the box on the upper side of the diagonal line.
   b. Working in this period with modifications. If so, write an **'M'** for Modified on the upper side of the diagonal line.
   c. Better served in an alternative setting, because his or her objective cannot be addressed adequately in the regular classroom, or the regular activity has no value at all for the student. If so, write **'AL'** for Alternative Location on the upper side of the diagonal line.

6. In each of these bottom row boxes, the group must then decide if the student will need assistance other than what the classroom teacher can provide. In the lower half of the box, one of the following codes is used:

p = peer **ad** = aide **2ndA** = second adult **no** = no assistance

. . . .

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Rainforth, B., York, J., & MacDonald, C. (1992). *Collaborative teams for students with severe disabilities.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Planning Matrix Sample

Name: Mike Cunningham **School:** Wilde Middle **Grade:** 7

REGULAR CLASS ACTIVITIES/PERIODS

IEP OBJECTIVES	Arrival / HR	Math	Reading	Science	English	Lunch	History	Home Ec.	Music	Gym	IA	Art	Computer
Improve articulation			x		x								
Fasten clothing, tie shoes	x									x			
Keep hands to self	x					x							
Walk without stumbling										x			
Say "No" to inappropriate pressure						x							
Choose between two methods				x				x					
Increase initiation w/ peers								x				x	
Work cooperatively in assembly line task											x		
Increase attention to teacher		x							x				
Increase sight words			x		x								
PARTICIPATION LEVEL	S / no	M / ad	M / ad	M / p	M / ad	S / no	AL / 2ndA	M / p	S / no	M / 2ndA	M / p	M / p	AL / 2ndA

S = Same M = Modified AL = Alternative Location
p = peer ad = aide 2ndA = Second Adult no = no assistance

Reprinted with permission by Beninghof, A.M. (1993). *Ideas for inclusion: The classroom teacher's guide to integrating students with severe disabilities.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Planning Matrix

Name: School: Grade:

REGULAR CLASS ACTIVITIES/PERIODS

IEP OBJECTIVES													
PARTICIPATION LEVEL													

S = Same M = Modified AL = Alternative Location

p = peer ad = aide 2ndA = Second Adult no = no assistance

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2.5 Time for Collaboration

"Mastering time is no task for the faint of heart."

R. ALEC MACKENZIE

As an educational leader you are in a position to unleash great things. This can be accomplished through empowering your staff to be creative and take risks. But, creativity takes time. If you want staff to collaboratively create successful programs for all students, then joint planning, thinking, and creating time is essential. Most staff are willing to provide some of their own time—before and after school, prep periods—to discuss inclusion. However, it is unreasonable to expect that teachers can find time in this manner to take care of all the issues that arise. Administrators need to acknowledge that opportunities for collaborative planning and problem solving are a necessary part of the school day.

How to find the time? Schools all over the country are grappling with this question. Some of the solutions they find are small, while others are large; some are short-term solutions, while others address the problem on a long-term basis. While you are likely to need some quick-fix solutions to get you through current situations, keep in mind that for successful inclusion to last, collaborative time must also be lasting.

Utilizing Substitute Teachers and Flexible Scheduling

One popular and effective strategy involves the use of substitute teachers. Once or twice per month a Collaboration Sign-up Sheet is placed in the office, with the daily schedule written down the side of the form in half hour blocks of time. Teachers and support staff sign up in pairs for the time period that is best for them, and can sign up for more than one block if necessary. The school then brings in one or two substitutes, depending upon the need. The substitutes cover for short periods of time, moving from one class to the next throughout the day.

Flexible schedules, or "flex time," can also support inclusion. One school allows their paraeducators to leave a half hour early one day during the week, in exchange for staying a half hour late another day of the week. This allows paraeducators to meet with their classroom teachers after school to discuss instructional issues. In another school, the principal allows her staff to leave at the same time as the students (a half hour short of the contract time) on pay day, in exchange for staying late one day for grade level team meetings. Her staff loves the chance to beat the crowd to the bank!

Make sure you are using substitutes to the fullest. When a substitute is covering for a teacher who is sick or on personal leave, they often have a free period during the day. While this would have been a prep period for the teacher, substitutes do not usually have preparation responsibilities. Therefore, this substitute can be asked to cover in another classroom, so that a teacher can have an extra planning or problem solving period. Simply notify your staff as soon as you realize that a substitute will be available (e.g., during morning announcements) and make the necessary arrangements.

Many schools have a PPT meeting day each week, where they hold several meetings in a row. Usually, a substitute is brought in to cover for the classroom teacher who will be in attendance at the meeting. If these meetings do not fill the entire day, be sure that your substitute is utilized to cover for other planning or meeting opportunities. In addition, if you only have PPT meetings scheduled for half of the day, consider hiring the substitute for the entire day. The difference in cost is usually minimal, and you can gain several hours of coverage for collaboration activities.

Many schools are experimenting with redesigning the traditional staff development days built into their school calendars. For example, if your school has three staff development days, consider breaking these into nine two-hour meetings instead. This newer configuration allows for a two-hour meeting almost every month throughout the year. While two hours may seem brief, the increased frequency, with shorter application periods between meetings, may result in better instruction and less frustration.

Another effective strategy is having administrators and other specialists teach one class every week, two weeks, or month. Many teachers roll their eyes at this strategy, however, most professionals who currently hold roles outside the classrooms, love the idea of teaching once in a while. The key phrase, however, is **once in a while**. If you feel that the rest of your job will be highly effected by taking on some classroom responsibilities, you may resist this idea. But, if you look at all of the people in your building that may be able to participate in this type of activity, you may just be able to add a few hours every week, two weeks, or month to the collaborative planning schedule. For example, in one building you may be able to utilize the principal, assistant principal, counselor, school psychologist, speech therapist, occupational therapist, reading specialist, special education teacher, and special education administrator. This would provide nine additional blocks of time! Give it a try—you will never know if you do not ask.

Scheduling of special subject area classes such as art, music, physical education, and library can provide some solutions (and potential headaches!). If it is possible to arrange for all teachers in the same grade level (or "house" as is often used in secondary schools) to have their specials at the same time, then grade level meetings can be arranged, ranging from one to four periods in length. While many teachers say they like to have their specials spread out through the week, they may not realize the possibilities of having an entire half-day each week for planning.

Of course, it may be time to break out of the box and consider a strategy used by schools in some Asian countries (Raywid, 1993). While the teacher-student ratio in the building is similar to that in American schools, class sizes are much larger. By assigning teachers larger classes, each teacher can also be freed up for greater periods of the school day or week for planning. The majority of teachers in these Asian schools typically spend 30 to 40% of their school time away from students. This type of model obviously depends on collaborative relationships, where teachers share students, rather than our more common model of elementary education where students typically interact with only one main teacher. While not without its glitches, this model bears consideration if our schools are ever going to fundamentally change the amount of time allowed for out-of-class activities.

References

Raywid, M. (1993). Finding time for collaboration. *Educational Leadership, 51*(1), 30-34.

CHAPTER

3

Assessment

Your inclusion efforts have been steadily but quietly increasing in your school. One day you receive a call from the local newspaper, informing you that they are doing a story on inclusion. They also mention that they will be reporting on costs related to inclusion, positions opposing inclusion, and the impact on student learning. Before closing, they ask for your comments . . . .

If it is not the local newspaper asking you for outcomes and results, it will be the board of education, the parents of general education students, the teachers' union or, the parent who is an inclusion advocate. But, as in many educational areas, it can be difficult to assess outcomes for a concept which is so individualized and so values driven.

Despite the difficulties, if inclusion is to survive, assessment is critical. Many educators are beginning to voice strong opinions concerning the efficacy and value of inclusion (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1994; Vergason and Anderegg, 1993). On the other hand, some full inclusionists feel that asking "Is inclusion right?" makes as little sense as asking if Tuesday is a good idea (Biklen, 1985). However, the realities of today's public schools include a strong focus on accountability and outcomes. Therefore, whether or not you have constituents looking for information at this time, it is wise to think about assessment of your school's practices.

In this chapter, strategies will be provided for three levels of assessment. The first is an individual student assessment related to inclusion, the second is program-wide assessment of inclusion efforts, and the third is an assessment of staff needs. Although the focus is very different in each case, there are some underlying principles which all three share. Begin by asking yourself some questions:

- **What is the purpose of this particular assessment?** If you can be clear about your purpose, the design of your assessment will flow more readily. Purposes might include showing individual student progress, justifying the value of inclusion, demonstrating impact on student population, weighing cost and benefit, or preparing for further program improvement. Each purpose will have a very different assessment process.
- **Who is the audience that will receive assessment information?** By targeting a particular audience, you can consider their unique concerns. For example, a parent of a student with disabilities is unlikely to be interested in your assessment of the monetary costs of the inclusive program. Similarly, boards of education have various concerns depending on the political and economic climate of a particular year.
- **Are there currently assessment systems in place which are appropriate for your needs?** The saying "there's no sense reinventing the wheel" holds doubly true here. First, efficiency is always an issue in overworked schools. Schools tend to collect vast amounts of information that end up collecting dust rather than being analyzed and put to good use. Whenever possible, utilize the information you already have at your fingertips. Second, one of the strongest tenets of inclusion is to provide normalized environments and opportunities for students with disabilities. Therefore, if it is possible to include a student in the same grading or other assessment system as students without disabilities; there is no need to invent another system.
- **Is the assessment system individualized enough for my unique situation?** As in instruction, assessment must often be custom designed. However, this can usually happen by taking some existing tool or technique and modifying parts of it to meet your needs. For example, the staff needs assessments in this chapter can easily be modified to address the specific issues of your staff or building. As a leader in your building, you may need to ensure that instructional staff and support personnel are also making a point to individualize assessment whenever necessary.

In addition to the role assessment plays in determining the effectiveness of your inclusion efforts, it can be used as a promotional strategy. For example, by looking at your teacher evaluation system in the light of inclusion, you will be able to see several areas in which teachers could be encouraged to improve their skills instructing all students. Through this analysis, professional objectives can be set that focus on skills needed for inclusion. As most teachers search for ideas for their annual objectives, they often readily accept this suggestion.

Assessment information can also be used to promote inclusion during other school restructuring efforts. Data regarding job acquisition of special education students after graduation (national and local) can be very powerful in the argument for reforming special education. Data regarding referrals to special education may also indicate a need to change the system for delivery of special services. In order to achieve this, examine the data you are already collecting for built-in support of your efforts.

. . . .

References

Biklen, D. (1985). *Achieving the complete school: Strategies for effective mainstreaming.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Fuchs, D. & Fuchs, L. (1994). Inclusive schools movement and the radicalization of special education reform. *Exceptional Children, 60* (4), 294-309.

Vergason, G. & Anderegg, M. (1993). "In my dreams": A second look at inclusion and programming. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 18*(4) 296-298.

3.1 Indicators of Successful Inclusive Schools

"Inclusion begins and ends with the individual."

ANNE BENINGHOF

What does inclusion look like? This question is one of the most difficult to answer because inclusion is always centered on meeting an individual's needs. Therefore, every classroom, school, and district may approach inclusion differently, and the end results may be completely distinctive.

However, as educators and researchers share their experience at conferences and in the field's literature, it becomes clear that there are common traits or indicators of successful inclusion. These include concepts such as high levels of interaction between students with and without disabilities, classrooms which reflect natural proportions, and de-emphasis of categorical labeling. The Indicators of Successful Inclusive Schools chart on page 56 has been designed as a list of the core components necessary for successful inclusion. Items on the chart are fundamental to inclusion and should be present in your school, no matter which specific methods or strategies are used to implement inclusion. For example, while many schools use peer tutoring to support inclusion, it is not absolutely essential for success, so it has not been included on this chart of indicators.

By utilizing the Indicators of Successful Inclusive Schools chart annually, you can identify your school's areas of strength and areas for growth. You can then track progress in each of those areas over the course of several years. In addition, the chart can be utilized as an informational tool for staff and community, indicating the critical factors which must be in place for successful inclusion.

Indicators of Successful Inclusive Schools

Scale: 1 = Not met; 2 = Partially met; 3 = Fully met

Indicator	Date	Date	Date	***Comments***
	Score	Score	Score	
• Classrooms reflect the natural proportion of students with disabilities in the general population (not to exceed 15%).				
• Students with disabilities have access to all physical locations in the building.				
• Students with disabilities use the same building facilities at the same time as students without disabilities.				
• Students with disabilities are physically integrated in classroom seating arrangements.				
• Students with and without disabilities are seen interacting frequently.				
• Students with disabilities are considered members of the class by the other students.				
• Students with disabilities are considered members of the class by the classroom teacher.				
• Students with disabilities receive most, if not all, of their special education and related services in general education settings.				
• Students with disabilities utilize most, if not all, of the same instructional materials in the classroom as students without disabilities.				
• Instruction of students with disabilities is viewed by all staff as a joint responsibility of special and general educators.				
• Instruction and grading are modified to meet the needs of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.				
• Categorical labeling of students and staff is de-emphasized.				
• Staff development programs integrate the needs of students with disabilities into the content and discussion.				
• Students with disabilities spend the majority of their day working in the same subject area as students without disabilities.				
• Adults in the classrooms share roles and responsibilities for working with students with disabilities to such an extent that the distinction between "specialist" and classroom teacher is not obvious.				
• High expectations for student progress on IEP objectives are maintained in inclusive settings.				
• The PPT meeting includes the input of the general education teacher or representative.				
• IEPs are written with an emphasis on general education materials, curricula, and settings.				
• Students with and without disabilities share transportation vehicles.				
• Students with disabilities have the same access to extracurricular activities as students without disabilities.				
• Students with disabilities attend school during the same hours and calendar days as students without disabilities, unless deemed necessary by the PPT.				
• Students with disabilities attend the same school as they would if they did not have disabilities.				

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3.2 Staff Needs Assessment

> *"A man with an experience is never at the mercy of a man with an argument."*
>
> C.S. LEWIS

"I need some training!" is one of the most often heard concerns voiced by teachers beginning inclusion. While the notion that good teaching is good teaching is an important concept for teachers to believe, it is also true that your staff may need some training or technical assistance in order to learn or improve their skills for effective inclusion. McLaughlin and Warren (1992) write "school-based staff development is considered to be the most responsive to teachers' needs, but often, too few resources are available at the school level for such activities" (p.24). It will be critical for any school embarking on inclusion to look closely at the needs within their building and to develop resources to meet those needs.

Several authors (Redden and Blackhurst, 1978; West, Idol, and Cannon, 1989) have identified the essential skills for collaboration between general and special educators, especially as they pertain to inclusion. These include:

- Knowledge of various service delivery models
- Willingness to accept all students
- Effective interactive communication skills
- Problem solving techniques
- The ability to evaluate and modify methods

Others (CEC Today, 1994; Meyers, 1992) have identified essential program components of inclusion. These include items such as:

- High standards
- Flexible instruction
- Collaboration
- A sense of community

With the application of the skills and components on the above lists, it is possible to create a needs assessment to disseminate to your staff. The information you gather will help you plan specific staff development activities for individuals or groups. These activities will vary based on the specific topic and also the readiness stage of each individual staff member. Hall, Wallace, and Dossett (1973) identified several stages through which individuals move in accepting new concepts or changes. Depending on an individual's stage on this continuum, they may need general inservice, specific resources, or any one of a variety of professional development activities (see Staff Development on page 24). Therefore, the needs assessment you utilize must generate information about the types of activities as well as the topics of interest.

Two versions of needs assessment questionnaires are presented on pages 59-61 for your use. You may wish to use them in this form or modify them to fit your particular needs.

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Redden, M. & Blackhurst, A. (1978, May). Mainstreaming competency specifications for elementary teachers. *Exceptional Children,* pp. 615-617.

West, J., Idol, L., & Cannon, G. (1989). *Collaboration in the schools.* Austin, TX: Pro-ed.

Needs Assessment I

Students with disabilities need to be educated in the mainstream to the maximum extent possible. This requires close collaboration between regular and special education staff, as well as training and adequate support. This questionnaire is being distributed to all staff to assess needs related to mainstreaming. This information will then be used to determine future support services. Please answer the items below with the following question in mind: **If ______________ were to increase the level of mainstreaming in the future, what would your needs be?**

In the space to the left of each statement, insert one or more letters, from A to E, to indicate your anticipated need for support services.

A. Need for training (workshop, seminar)

B. Need for consultation

C. Need for materials

D. Need for in-class assistance

E. No need

______ 1. Philosophy and underlying principles of mainstreaming

______ 2. Characteristics of students with disabilities

______ 3. Preparation of students without disabilities for mainstreaming

______ 4. Understanding assessment of students with disabilities

______ 5. IEP design

______ 6. Curriculum for students with disabilities

______ 7. Data collection on student progress

______ 8. Instructional strategies for students with disabilities

______ 9. Fostering relationships between students with and without disabilities

______ 10. Behavior management for students with disabilities

______ 11. Instruction for heterogeneous groups

______ 12. Classroom organization

______ 13. Participation in collaborative consultation

______ 14. Improving team effectiveness

______ 15. Accessing resource and support systems

______ 16. Supervision of paraeducators

______ 17. Legal issues related to students with disabilities

______ 18. Medical issues related to students with disabilities

Please indicate the number of your top three priorities:

________________ ________________ ________________

Please indicate your role:

_____ Regular education teacher _____Special education teacher

_____ Administrator _____ Related professional _____Other

Please indicate the level(s) at which you work:

_____ Elementary _____ Middle _____ High school

Please return to ____________________________ by ________________ .

Developed by the LRE Task Force, Waterbury Public Schools, Waterbury, Connecticut.

Needs Assessment II

The professional development committee of ____________________ School would like your input on staff development activities to support inclusion. Please take a few moments to answer the following questions so that we can plan appropriately.

1. What specific topics would you like addressed through inservice workshops? Check all that apply:

   ______ Curriculum modification

   ______ Grading modification

   ______ Friendship facilitation

   ______ Co-teaching

   ______ Peer tutoring

   ______ Characteristics of various disabilities

   ______ Other: ________________________

2. Which of the following activities would you participate in, if offered? Check all that apply:

   ______ School visitations to observe inclusive programs

   ______ Problem solving meetings

   ______ Research on effective methodologies for inclusion

   ______ Book reading on topics related to inclusion

   ______ After-school workshops

   ______ Video viewing

   ______ Other: ________________________

3. What other, if any, supports do you feel you need in order to make inclusion successful?

Please return to ______________________________ by _________________ .

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3.3 Grading Modifications

"What really matters is what you do with what you have."

SHIRLEY LORD

For as long as teachers have been handing out grades, students and others have been questioning their "fairness." So the fact that fairness in grading is being questioned as part of inclusion is not surprising. While the arguments about fairness may not be new, there are some new strategies for taking proactive steps to avoid conflict over modified grading practices.

The first step an educational leader must take is to facilitate open dialogue among teachers regarding grading philosophies and practices. This discussion can be guided by the following questions:

- How do you currently determine grades for a student?
- Do you consider effort, ability, or attitude when grading?
- Do you consider how the student compares with others in the class when grading?
- Do you ever change grades? If so, why?
- What purposes do you feel a grade serves?

By raising these or similar questions, you allow your staff to share a variety of perspectives on grading. Despite the variety, responses tend to reinforce two key concepts regarding grading:

1. **Grading is arbitrary.** There is no one set of rules by which all grades are logically determined.
2. **Grading practices must be flexible.** If you look hard enough, every teacher can find special circumstances under which they adjust or modify grades.

If teachers can accept these two concepts, then you are ready to move forward. The second step is to design a grading policy or belief statement. The following statement (Beninghof, 1994) encourages grading modification, while leaving specific practices flexible and undetermined.

> *It should be the policy of this school to employ differential standards for grading and course requirements. The regular classroom teacher is encouraged to modify curriculum, instructional approaches, and grading practices for those identified as students with disabilities in the regular classroom (p.86).*

This type of statement can become a guideline for teachers, making it clear that they are permitted and encouraged to modify grades for students with disabilities. General education teachers often express a great sense of relief when they see a policy statement, such as this one, in place.

The next step is to design a modification form (see Modified Course Agreement on page 64). This form can be used as a complete listing of all modifications agreed upon by the team, or can focus on just one aspect of modifications, such as grading. This form can then be attached to the student's IEP in place of the modifications section on the IEP form. (These sections do not usually allow enough room to be specific about modifications.) The most important benefit of a modification form is the opportunity it allows for teachers, parents, and students to discuss and agree upon appropriate modifications. The form serves as a communication tool—parents and students understand what their courses will really entail and teachers understand the commitments they have made.

In addition to the above activities, school administrators may also want to modify the report cards used in the district in order to allow for more accurate reflections of student ability and progress. In particular, two areas may warrant modification. First, if teachers have collaborated in the instruction of a student, then grading should also be collaborative. When this occurs, both teachers' names should be on the report card. This can usually be accomplished with a very slight modification to the reporting form or computer program. Second, it may be necessary to adapt the report card to allow space for written information about the student. Because an 'A' in Science may not mean the same for one student as for another, greater clarity may be desired. A narrative description of the student's strengths and areas of concern will more clearly communicate the student's school progress. While some report cards have a small space for this type of information, it may be necessary to allow greater room for comments regarding students in inclusive programs.

A final area for concern of teachers, parents, and students in regards to grading modification is the impact on motivational ranking systems, such as honor roll and class rank. It is generally recommended that students in modified courses continue to be eligible for honor roll systems. They, like all students, can benefit from a recognition system such as this. Usually staff are also more comfortable in allowing all students to be eligible for honor roll. The more challenging decision comes when considering the class ranking system. Many feel that a high class rank is critical for college admission and therefore, it is unfair to allow students in modified courses to alter the rank of other students. Some high schools have "weighted" the modified courses less than others so that students in these courses are unlikely to be competitive for high class ranks. Other schools exclude students in modified courses from the class rank altogether. (Many colleges offer students with disabilities alternative admissions procedures which do not require a high class rank.) Obviously, whichever approach is used, it is critical to clearly communicate the outcomes to parents and students so that they fully understand the impact of grading modifications on their school program.

By involving staff in all of these discussions and decisions, you are sure to gain a greater understanding for and commitment to the fairness of modified grading for students with disabilities.

References

Beninghof, A.M. (1994). *Ideas for inclusion: The classroom teacher's guide to integrating students with severe disabilities.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Course Title: ______________________________

Modified Course Agreement

This agreement is written to accommodate ______________________________'s special learning style through instruction in the regular education program.

Modified Course Goals:

Modified Course Objectives:

Materials:

Teaching Approach:

Grading Approach:

Testing Approach:

	Signature	Date
Teacher	______________________	__________
Student	______________________	__________
Parent	______________________	__________
Case Coordinator	______________________	__________
PPT Coordinator	______________________	__________
Counselor	______________________	__________
Administrator	______________________	__________

Developed by: John J. Brady, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Killingly Public Schools, Killingly, Connecticut.

3.4 Evaluating Student Progress

"The more we know, the more we want to know; when we know enough, we know how much we don't know."

CAROL ORLOCK

In an age when so many people are looking to standardized test scores to evaluate the effectiveness of teachers and schools, it may be difficult to envision how students with disabilities can fit in. For many of these students, standardized tests are not only inappropriate, but usually meaningless. Yet, it is critical to keep track of their educational progress so that you and your staff can work to improve their instructional programs.

What are the issues that may make the evaluation of students with disabilities different? First, many students with disabilities show progress at very slow rates. Standard measurement tools usually do not show small increments of growth. Second, students with disabilities usually have highly individualized programs. On the other hand, standardized tools, by their nature, are normed on large groups of students. Third, schools have a legal responsibility to report a student's progress on specific Individual Education Plan (IEP) objectives. Therefore, teachers must have specific information available to them on those objectives, which are not usually found in standardized test results. Finally, many standardized tests are discriminatory for students with disabilities. They usually require a paper and pencil response, or rely on some spoken or physical gesture, which many students with more severe disabilities may be unable to do.

Fortunately, alternative types of assessment are taking place in general education settings as well as special education (Herman, Aschbacher, and Winters, 1992). The movement toward authentic and portfolio assessment is in keeping with inclusive education principles and will make the evaluation of students with disabilities less troublesome.

To assist teachers in assessing the progress of students with disabilities, it may be necessary to provide them with information and/or instruction in how to efficiently and effectively collect data in the classroom. The four most common types of data collection methods used in inclusive classrooms are frequency, duration, interval and, narrative; the Data Collection Methods chart on page 66, developed with teachers in Vernon, Connecticut, summarizes the uses of each.

Data Collection Methods

Type	***Possible Behaviors***	***How to Record***
Duration	Any behavior that lasts for awhile, such as: • crying • on task/off task • out of seat	Record when the behavior begins and ends using a clock or stopwatch.
Tallying/ Frequency	Any behavior that is a discreet, separate event, such as: • hitting • work completion • known vocabulary words	List the time period for which you are counting behaviors. Tally the number of target behaviors.
Momentary Interval	Any behavior that you cannot observe constantly, such as: • on task/off task • daydreaming • talking to neighbor	Choose length of time interval (e.g., five min.). Look at student every five minutes and record + or - behavior, or a description of behavior.
Anecdotal	When you do not have a clear sense of student's behavior and want to look at the whole picture.	Keep track of time in your notes (e.g., every five min.). Continually describe what happens before the student's behavior, what the behavior was, and what happens immediately following the behavior.

In order to use the described data collection methods effectively, the original IEP objectives must include a specific criteria for success. For example, "John will behave appropriately in class." is very difficult to measure, whereas "John will stay in his seat for a ten-minute interval, once a day for five consecutive days." is very measurable. As a school administrator, you can avoid problems in this area by requiring teachers and related professionals to include specific criteria when the IEP is originally designed.

When should data be collected on each of the student's IEP objectives? As an administrator, you understand that instructional time is a priority for teachers. However, effective teachers assess students daily to insure that instruction is at the appropriate level. The same thing should hold true for students with disabilities. Assessment should occur frequently enough to ensure that instructional levels are appropriate. Data collection systems should be used at least once a week, addressing each stated objective a student has on his or her IEP.

Who is responsible for collecting data? The classroom teacher already has so many responsibilities that data collection is often turned over to the special education personnel. While this practice may be acceptable on some occasions, data collection should be a shared responsibility. If trying to instill a belief that students with disabilities are "our" students, rather than "yours" or "mine," you must look for ways that everyone can participate in the task of data collection. You can encourage this through providing training to all staff members in data collection techniques, offering to participate in data collection yourself, and commenting upon data collection as part of your staff observations and evaluations.

The following data collection forms (pages 68-75) were designed by a team of teachers interested in easy-to-understand charting procedures. Encourage teachers to use them in their current forms or modify them to fit their needs.

. . . .

References

Herman, J., Aschbacher, P., & Winters, L. (1992). *A practical guide to alternative assessment.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Data Collection Form
Duration (Sample)

Name: Rachel

Behavior: Off task—gazing, squirming, playing, not putting pencil or attenion to paper.

DATE	OBSERVER	SETTING	START TIME	STOP TIME	TOTAL TIME	COMMENTS
11/2	AMB	classroom	8:17	8:20	3	
		"	8:25	8:26	1	
		"	8:27	8:31	4	
		"	8:36	8:41	5	
		"	8:44	8:45	1	
					14 min.	out of 30-min. observation
11/3	J.S.	classroom	10:00	10:04	4	
		(math)	10:12	10:13	1	
			10:17	10:20	3	
			10:26	10:30	4	
					12 min.	out of 30-min. observation

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Data Collection Form
Duration

Name: ____

Behavior: ____

DATE	OBSERVER	SETTING	START TIME	STOP TIME	TOTAL TIME	COMMENTS

Average Duration ________________

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Date Collection Form
Frequency (Sample)

Name: Keisha

Target Behavior: Out of seat (without being directed by teacher).

DATE	OBSERVER	TIME OBSERVED	FREQUENCY/TALLIES	TOTAL	COMMENTS
10/15	KL	9:00-9:15	𝍸 𝍸 ||	12	
10/17	KL	9:00-9:15	𝍸 𝍸 𝍸 |	16	
10/19	SW	9:25-9:40	|||	3	

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Date Collection Form
Frequency

Name: ____

Target Behavior: ____

DATE	OBSERVER	TIME OBSERVED	FREQUENCY/TALLIES	TOTAL	COMMENTS

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Data Collection Form
Momentary Interval (Sample)

Name: Tyler

Behavior: On-task (following teacher's direction, whatever the activity) = +

DATE	TIME	OBSERVER	SETTING	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	INTERVAL LENGTH (MIN)	COMMENTS
3/7	9:00-9:50	J.B.	classroom	+	+	-	-	+	-	+	+	+	-	5 min.	
3/8	10:15-11:05	J.B.	classroom art room	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	5 min.	seemed bothered by noise

Average number of intervals 5/10 or 50%

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Data Collection Form
Momentary Interval

Name: ______________________________

Behavior: ______________________________

DATE	TIME	OBSERVER	SETTING	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	INTERVAL LENGTH (MIN)	COMMENTS

Average number of intervals __________

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Data Collection Form
Anecdotal (Sample)

Student: Jeremiah

Target Behavior(s): Calling out and being out of seat

Observer: Viviana W.

DATE TIME	ANTECEDENT(S)	BEHAVIOR(S)	CONSEQUENCE(S)
2/20 9:00	Teacher gave directions, Jeremiah wasn't listening.	Jeremiah called out, "Mrs. B., I need help!"	Mrs. B. went to his desk and repeated directions.
9:17	Mrs. B. with group in front, Jeremiah at seat, raised his hand and Mrs. B. didn't see him.	Jeremiah went up to her.	Mrs. B. reminded him to stay in his seat; suggested he ask a friend for help.
9:33	Mrs. B. with group in front, Jeremiah at seat with raised hand, but no response	Jeremiah called out to Mrs. B.	Mrs. B. says, "Jeremiah, I told you not to call out. Come here." Mrs. B. reminded him that she was busy and then answered his question.
9:50	Mrs. B. asked the whole class a question.	Jeremiah raised his hand and looked eager to answer.	Mrs. B. called on another student.
9:52	Mrs. B. asked another question.	Jeremiah called out answer.	Mrs. B. says, "Right, but don't forget to raise your hand."
10:00	Mrs. B. at desk grading papers. Students doing seatwork.	Jeremiah went up to Mrs. B.'s desk.	Mrs. B. helped him and he went back to seat.

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Data Collection Form
Anecdotal

Student: ____

Target Behavior(s): ______________________________________

____

____

Observer: ____

DATE TIME	ANTECEDENT(S)	BEHAVIOR(S)	CONSEQUENCE(S)

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CHAPTER

4

Curriculum and Instruction

Mr. Hinman is a veteran teacher in your building, with an excellent reputation for teaching sixth grade math. He is also well known for his flexible approach in working with students. He comes to you after being informed that a student with mild retardation will be attending his math class for the rest of the semester. His main concern—"What do I do with a student who is several years behind the rest of my students?"

Many teachers are committed to the philosophy of inclusion, but feel uncertain about implementation. They are simply unsure of where to start with their instructional responsibilities. By providing them with practical strategies and ideas which they can put to use, you will demonstrate that inclusion is a workable idea.

When considering curriculum and instruction for students with disabilities, there are several key points to keep in mind. First, someone very wise once said "**Good teaching is good teaching**." This premise is at the heart of inclusion. If a teacher is a competent, creative professional with general education students, then they can also be so for students with disabilities. While there may be some specific skills which specialists have in their bag of tricks, the instruction of students with or without disabilities is generally the same. An effective teacher provides motivation, presents concepts in small enough pieces so as to be understood, provides ample opportunity for application and practice, and reinforces learning. The main difference between students is the amount and type of learning they can process. With this in mind, as school administrator, you can begin to help your staff recognize their capabilities.

The second thing to keep in mind is to **begin with what you already have**—the grade level curriculum, materials, and instructional practices—and try to meet the student's identified needs within that framework. By taking this approach you will reinforce the principle of normalization which underlies the inclusive schools movement. Whenever possible, the student will be offered the normal opportunities that they would be offered if they did not have a disability. This approach will also alleviate much unnecessary work. If teachers have to continually design different curricula, materials, and instructional practices for different students, they will be overwhelmed before too long.

To be successful within the typical curricula, the student with disabilities may need to be allowed to **partially participate** (Brown, 1979). This principle refers to the recognition that students can be purposefully, actively involved in a lesson without being expected to perform at the same level as everyone else. For example, a student may partially participate by demonstrating their grasp of multiplication by completing only five problems rather than the typical ten. Another student, with goals for learning addition, may use the same math worksheet but be expected to add the problems rather than multiply them. And yet another student might be learning the concept of one-to-one correspondence and be asked to count out enough papers and distribute them to the class. As demonstrated in these examples, partial participation can mean many different things, depending on the student involved.

Related to these concepts is the need for guidelines by which to prioritize a student's time and learning outcomes. The following four concepts are effective guidelines for prioritizing.

Functionality is one well accepted criteria for the education of students with and without disabilities (Beck, Broers, Hogue, Shipstead, and Knowlton, 1994; Clark, 1994). Questions that teachers or an educational team should ask themselves regarding functionality include: What function does this learning serve in the student's life? And, is it something that he or she will be able to really use in one way or another?

Age-appropriateness is another criteria to use in making curricular and instructional decisions. Encouraging age-appropriate practices also encourages high expectations for students. Questions to ask include: Would other students of the same age be doing this? Be treated this way? Be talked to this way?

Relationship development can also be a guideline for prioritizing. Because of the benefits peer relationships hold for student learning, educational teams can evaluate activities by the amount and quality of contact they bring between students with and without disabilities. Questions to consider include: How many other students will the student with disabilities come in contact with? How much opportunity for interaction does the activity or class provide? Are there more ideal times or places throughout the day for the student to interact with peers?

Family preference is the final guideline for making decisions about student priorities. Families truly know their children best and will have to live with the decisions made about them over time, more so than the professionals who come and go in their lives. In addition, it has been the wisdom of parents that has brought about inclusion. Parents were able to look at educational programs and recognize what was missing. So ask yourself, and the family, these questions: What is the family/parental preference? Will a specific skill or activity assist the student in their home or in a community setting, as well as in school?

The strategies outlined in this chapter will give the school administrator and other educational team members several organizational formats and ideas for curriculum and instruction. By pulling the team together, following the above guidelines, and collaborating in planning and implementation, it should be fairly simple to answer the question, "What do I do with this student?"

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4.1 Inclusive IEPs

> *"Vision without action is merely a dream. Action without vision just passes the time."*
>
> JOEL BARKER

It would be wonderful if a student's IEP was seen as a useful, dynamic document. While the original purpose of the IEP was for it be viewed as such, in practice it is usually relegated to a desk drawer to collect dust.

Luckily, some school districts have decided that it is time to revitalize the IEP, especially as a useful document for the promotion and implementation of inclusion. In doing so, these successful districts keep two things in the forefront of their mind: the IEP must be understandable by all involved, and it must be tied to the typical program as much as possible. With these things in mind, the teams explore each of the IEP components for methods to achieve these goals. These components, as mandated by federal legislation as well as by state and local practice, are illustrated in the chart below.

Federally Mandated IEP Components	***Common State/Local Components***
• Present level of educational performance • Annual goals • Short-term instructional objectives • Specific special education and related services • Participation in regular education • Initiation and duration of services • Criteria and evaluation procedures • Individual transition/vocational plan	• Evaluation schedule • List of implementors • Transportation • Length of school day and year • Exit criteria • Recommended instructional setting • Modifications to regular education

While the main components will be similar in all IEPs, they will differ widely from school district to school district. In addition, the Planning and Placement Team meetings, which are held to develop the IEP, may be very different from team to team. However, it is important to keep in mind one critical mandate about the order of discussion surrounding the IEP. This mandate prescribes that prior to placement discussions, the student's current performance level, annual goals, short-term objectives, and special services must all be identified. Then, and only then, are decisions about instructional settings to occur.

IEP Components

Following is a list of various considerations or methodologies in each of the IEP component areas.

Present Level of Educational Performance

Best practices in this area include:

- Emphasizing a student's capacities, especially in terms of strengths to be built upon in the classroom.

- Discussion of current performance in any integrated environment in which the student participates (e.g., hallways, playground).
- De-emphasis of normative scores, IQ numbers, etc. While this information may need to be included in some cases, it is not usually very helpful in prescribing instructional practices.
- Avoidance of educational jargon. This suggestion applies to all areas of the IEP and other educational materials. If we truly want parents and general educators to be comfortable and involved, we need to utilize language that is understandable. If necessary, the educational terminology can be included in parentheses following other words. For example, "arm (upper extremity)."

Annual Goals

Best practices in this area include:

- Goals that reflect those used in general education curriculum whenever appropriate (e.g., "to improve language arts skills" vs. "to improve communication skills"). This sets the tone for the possibility of inclusion.

Short-Term Instructional Objectives

Best practices in this area include:

- Objectives that reflect the general education curriculum whenever possible.
- Objectives that are written clearly enough to enable any staff person to understand them and assist in their implementation.
- Listing of the specific environments in which the activity will take place (e.g., "When in gym class, Tanya will . . . ").
- Designing objectives that address the friendship and social skills necessary for success in the general education setting.

Specific Special Education and Related Services

Best practices in this area include:

- Remembering that special education and related services are services, not places. Therefore services can be integrated into the general education environment, rather than provided in a pull-out fashion.
- Utilizing consultation as a viable and worthwhile type of service delivery, especially for inclusive programs. Through implementing consultation, staff are given the opportunity to share their skills across disciplines, resulting in expanded services to students.

Participation in General Education

Best practices in this area include:

- Viewing general education as a service rather than a location. In other words, participation in general education can be viewed as being involved with peers without disabilities in a variety of inclusive settings other than the classroom.

- Beginning with the assumption that the student belongs in general education, and considering the types of supplementary aids and services necessary to support him or her there.

Performance Criteria

Best practices in this area include:

- Criteria that will be observable and measurable (e.g., "raise hand three times during the period" vs. "behave appropriately in class").
- Criteria that reflect the need for generalization across various inclusive environments (e.g., "in three different settings").
- Criteria that may be a modified version of the criteria set for other students in the class (e.g., "90% of the assigned problems").

Evaluation Procedures

Best practices in this area include:

- Development of evaluation procedures that are reasonable within a general education classroom.
- Procedures which allow for modification (e.g., oral vs. written tests).
- Staff support as necessary for the implementation of modified evaluation procedures.

Individual Transition/Vocational Plan

Best practices in this area include:

- Listing community and work locations in which people without disabilities normally spend their time.
- Including activities that will foster social/friendship skills.

Evaluation Schedule

Best practices in this area include:

- Use of the same evaluation schedule as that used for students in general education.
- Flexible timelines which allow for interim evaluation to monitor "new" placements in general education. Often, teachers and parents will feel more willing to try an inclusive program when given the option to review it frequently.

List of Implementors

Best practices in this area include:

- Assigning of responsibility based on skills rather than disciplinary titles.
- Listing of names of the general education staff as well as special education personnel, and/or use of the phrase "teaching team."

Transportation

Best practices in this area include:

- Utilizing typical transportation whenever possible. Have you considered adapting seats on the bus, using a paraeducator on the bus, or providing assistance on and off the bus?
- Normalizing nontypical transportation to the extent possible. For example, if the student must ride a small, wheelchair accessible bus, consider transporting several neighborhood peers on the same bus.

Length of School Day and Year

Best practices in this area include:

- Designing a schedule that, at a minimum, reflects the same number of hours and days as that of students without disabilities (unless deemed inappropriate by the PPT).
- Examining extracurricular activities as possibilities for extended day programming.
- Examining summer programs within the community for all students. Necessary therapy and/or instruction can usually take place within the context of typical summer activities.

Exit Criteria

Best practices in this area include:

- Listing specific goals, that when achieved, would allow a student to be de-labeled.

Recommended Instructional Setting

Best practices in this area include:

- Maximizing the use of general education environments. The team should begin with the assumption that the general education classroom is the environment of choice, and then discuss the supplementary aids and services necessary to help the student be successful in that environment.

Modifications in General Education

Best practices in this area include:

- Listing specific information on expected modifications rather than "modifications as necessary." Areas for modification may include staffing, materials, instructional procedures, curriculum, evaluation, grading, and the environment. You may find that you need a larger writing space than your current form allows.
- Team consensus on modifications so that later efforts at implementation are supported by all involved.

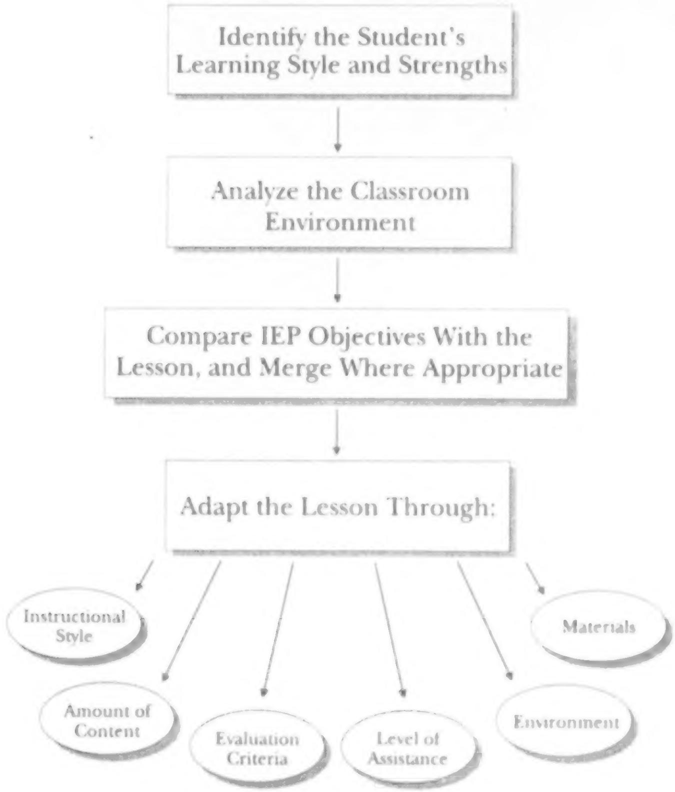
Following these recommendations will assist you in making your IEPs useful, worthwhile documents for the parents, the educational team, and, most importantly, the students.

4.2 Curriculum Modification

> *"You don't have to be afraid of change. You don't have to worry about what's been taken away. Just look to see what's been added."*
>
> JACKIE GREER

Curriculum has never been a static thing; anyone who has been in the field of education for even a few years knows this. Schools are continuously examining and adapting their curriculum to meet the changing needs of their students and society. In addition to changing the curriculum as a whole, good teachers have always practiced curriculum modification for individual students or for specific units that were not meeting the needs of everyone in their classrooms. Therefore, many of your teachers will be comfortable with the notion and process of modifying curriculum in order to successfully include all students. For those who may be a little less confident, it may be helpful to present curriculum modification as a step-by-step process, through which teachers can find a variety of methods for assisting students to succeed.

The Curriculum Modification Process


Identify the Student's Learning Style and Strengths
Analyze the Classroom Environment
Compare IEP Objectives With the Lesson, and Merge Where Appropriate
Adapt the Lesson Through:
Instructional Style
Amount of Content
Evaluation Criteria
Level of Assistance
Environment
Materials

Identify Student's Learning Style and Strengths—The first step in modifying is to gather information about the student; information regarding his or her learning style and areas of strength. Without this information, it is almost impossible to accurately adapt instruction. How can a teacher know whether the use of an overhead projector will help or hinder? Or, how effective books on audiotape will be? While these modification ideas may help some students, they may be a waste of time with others. Teachers must begin by assessing the learning styles of all the students in their class. Once they have this information, they can plan instruction accordingly. In addition, this information can be shared with students in order that they begin to understand and see themselves as learners. Finally, the information can also be shared with parents, who will then be able to better assist their child's learning in the home.

Analyze the Classroom Environment—Every classroom is different, so modifications will differ. For example, one teacher writes students' names on the board as part of his discipline policy, while another teacher uses red, yellow, or green cards to indicate at what stage a student is being warned. Depending on which classroom is including a specific student, the management system may need to be modified. The same holds true for other classroom variables: seating, lighting, structure, organization, amount of direction, group work, etc. Each of these variables should be considered when developing modifications for a specific student.

Compare IEP Objectives with Lesson and Merge Where Appropriate—By examining the components of the lesson and the student's IEP objectives concurrently, it is possible to determine where instruction will be most strongly focused and if modifications are necessary. This is usually accomplished through the use of a planning matrix, such as the examples presented on pages 48-49. Once this step has been taken, it is time to consider the specific adaptations that will be necessary in order for the student to be successful.

Adapt Lesson Through Instructional Style, Amount of Content, Evaluation Criteria, Level of Assistance, Environment, or Materials—Many teachers immediately focus their modification efforts on the materials the student will be using. While this is sometimes necessary, it is worthwhile to consider modifications in all of the mentioned areas. Materials modifications can often take the most time—something teachers have precious little of—whereas a modification in instructional style may take very little extra time. In addition, environmental modifications, such as chairs that match body sizes, can often avert hours of more extensive modifications, such as complicated behavior management plans. As an instructional leader, you can encourage your teachers and support personnel to think through the whole host of modification options available to them and to make choices which are ultimately best for the student and the staff.

By thinking of curriculum modification as a dynamic process with many options, educators have the opportunity to use their creativity and problem solving skills to help students with special needs be successful. For the school administrator, curriculum modification provides opportunities to encourage reflection on teaching practices and use of innovative approaches to instructional materials. All in all, curriculum modification can be seen as, and become, a catalyst for excellence in individual instruction.

4.3 Collaborative Teaching

"Great minds have purposes, others have wishes."

WASHINGTON IRVING

One of the most common strategies used to effectively include students is collaborative teaching. Also called team teaching, co-teaching, and transdisciplinary teaming, this strategy brings with it many benefits for students and staff. The following are just a few benefits of this collaborative approach:

- Special education service can be provided within the general education classroom, because the special education staff go where the student is, rather than expecting the student to go to them in another location.
- Students do not miss classroom activities or content while being pulled out, but instead have extra assistance while they work on the same activities as other students in the room.
- All students in the class have access to another person: an extra bit of help, an extra evaluative view, an extra classroom manager, and an additional instructor who is likely to have a different instructional style.
- Team members have an opportunity to learn from each other: various instructional techniques, therapeutic interventions, learning activities, etc. Co-teaching is a wonderful form of on-going staff development.

With all of these benefits, why are not more people leaping onto the co-teaching bandwagon? For some it is the fear of giving up control over their territory, for others it may be a lack of structure for collaboration, and still others may see differing teaching styles as prohibitive to collaboration. Whatever the reason, the school administrator can encourage co-teaching in several ways.

The first step taken toward collaboration by many school administrators is to ask staff to examine their individual "styles." One Connecticut elementary school used a staff development day to administer Anthony Gregorc's *Gregorc Style Delineator* (1985). After all staff (principal, therapists, teachers, support staff, everyone!) had completed this short assessment, individual styles were identified. This model places individuals into one of four basic types: Abstract/Random, Abstract/Sequential, Concrete/Random and Concrete/Sequential. After styles were identified and participants were given some information about the four styles, the staff was mixed into various groupings. First, all teachers identified with the same style were grouped together. (Teachers tend to be largely concrete sequential.) Next, they were grouped randomly to discuss their various styles or approaches to teaching. Finally, staff were grouped according to any of the team structures used in the building (grade level teams, teaching teams, committees, student assistance teams, school improvement teams, etc.) to examine how style may influence team work. All of this focus on style provides team members with the opportunity to talk about the challenges and joys of working closely together, even when various styles are present. Awareness of and sensitivity to the various styles people bring to a collaborative situation can make co-teaching much easier and more effective for students and staff.

A second step in implementing effective co-teaching is to provide a framework or structure around which co-teachers can design their instruction. Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend (1989) describe three different frameworks for co-teaching, which they call complementary instruction, team teaching, and supportive learning activities.

- **Complementary Instruction**—A classroom situation where the general educator teaches the basic content of the class and the special educator teaches academic survival skills, such as note taking and study habits.
- **Team Teaching**—A classroom situation where both teachers take turns being responsible for teaching the basic academic content. Decisions are made based on the teachers' interest and skill level with the material, rather than on their certification or job title.
- **Supportive Learning Activities**—A classroom situation where the general educator is responsible for presenting the basic points of a lesson, while the special educator is responsible for the application activities which enhance comprehension and retention (e.g., science experiments and discussions).

School administrators can help co-teachers to understand that there are a variety of ways in which they can operate, depending on their styles, strengths, preferences, time availability, etc. This information can be shared by circulating the aforementioned Bauwens, Hourcade and Friend article, providing a mini-inservice at a faculty meeting, discussing options at grade level meetings, or combining this information with the session on differing teaching styles as described previously.

A third strategy a school administrator can use to support co-teaching is to provide a list of questions to potential or current co-teachers to guide their discussions about roles and responsibilities in a collaborative model. Utilizing the Collaboratiave Teaching Responsibilities chart (or a modified version) on page 88, can result in clearly defined responsibilities for all teachers involved in collaboration.

. . . .

References

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Collaborative Teaching Responsibilities

Directions: Discuss the following questions with your partner and reach a conclusion in each case regarding who will bear the responsibility for the tasks.

Who will be responsible for:	**Classroom Teacher**	**Special Educator**	**Other**	**Shared**
Identifying goals and objectives for the course?				
Designing IEP objectives for the special education students?				
Planning instructional activities to achieve the goals?				
Selecting and organizing instructional materials?				
Teaching specific class content?				
Teaching study skills and learning strategies?				
Collecting data on student performance?				
Establishing and implementing grading procedures?				
Establishing and implementing a classroom management plan?				
Maintaining home contact?				
Modifying curriculum and materials as necessary?				
Designing tests, homework assignments, etc.?				
Providing individual assistance to students?				
Taking care of daily routines (e.g., attendance, lunch counts)?				
Directing paraeducators, parent volunteers, and/or other support personnel?				
Communicating to all appropriate parties regarding the special education students?				

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4.4 Community-Based Instruction

"It takes an entire village to raise a single child."

AFRICAN PROVERB

What do you do on the weekends? How about the evenings? Most of us spend some time at home, do the grocery shopping, go out for a meal, and run some errands. In a typical week we visit at least five or six community settings, other than school.

Students with disabilities also spend time with their families in a variety of community settings. Unfortunately, many of these students do not generalize skills well enough to noninstructional settings (Brown, Nisbet, Ford, Sweet, Shiraga, York, and Loomis, 1983). Even though they can demonstrate in school how to make change for a dollar, they may be totally confused when it comes to buying a drink at the convenience store. Because of this difficulty in generalizing, students with disabilities may need certain skills to be taught in real settings, rather than in school. For example, if a student has a vocational goal to stock shelves, the likelihood of success is much greater if the instruction occurs in a drug store or grocery store with all of the natural distractions and characteristics. If a student is learning to use a communication board, it may be important for the student to practice the skill by ordering lunch at a fast food restaurant.

Despite the benefits of community-based instruction, there is controversy among educators over whether inclusion means that students remain in the school building for the entire day, or that students with disabilities be included in both school and community environments. Brown, et al. (1983) argue that the more significant the disability, the greater the need for "concurrent instruction" (p.75). Others argue that if students without disabilities spend all of their time in the school building, then students with disabilities should as well. With these divergent views, how does a team decide if community-based instruction is appropriate?

The first step is to complete an ecological inventory. This is a process that solicits information from the team members, particularly the parents, concerning community environments the student is currently accessing and which he or she would like to access in the future. It is then determined which skills the student needs in order to more fully participate in the activities which occur in those settings.

The second step is to consider the student's age. There are two issues regarding age. The first is that younger students have many years left in which to acquire missing skills. Therefore, it may be appropriate to save community instruction until later in the student's school career. The second issue is that it is less age-appropriate for younger students to be in the community during school hours than it is for adolescents. Work study and service learning programs are very common in secondary grades. A student with disabilities receiving community-based instruction fits in more naturally with the activities of his or her teenage peers.

Sailor and Guess (1983) proposed the following age guidelines for students with **severe** disabilities:

Age	Community Setting	School at Large	Classroom
3 - 6	10%	25%	65%
6 - 9	25	35	40
9 - 12	50	25	25
12 - 16	75	15	10
16 - 21	85	15	0

Guidelines developed by the authors for students with **mild** disabilities may look more like this:

Age	Community Setting	School at Large	Classroom
3 - 9	5%	10%	85%
9 - 12	10	20	70
12 - 16	15	15	70
16 - 18	50	15	35
18 - 21	90	10	0

It is important to keep in mind that these are called guidelines for a reason; they are meant to stimulate discussion about the appropriate number of hours of community instruction. In each case, the team must take the responsibility for determining what is appropriate for a specific student.

The third step in determining the appropriateness of community-based instruction is to set priorities. There are only so many hours in a day, so the team must determine the value of each of the proposed instructional activities. In prioritizing, you should consider parent preferences and the frequency of opportunities they have to involve their child in the community during hours outside of school.

Once it has been determined that a student should be receiving community-based instruction, the following factors need to be considered.

Transportation—Whenever possible, try to utilize transportation that is closest to the "norm" used by the majority of students. This may include using the public bus system, walking, taking a taxi, or riding on the "regular" school bus. If necessary, a "special" bus can be utilized, but it tends to reinforce the stigma of disability. One additional option is to check into the transportation system in use for secondary students who are in work study or service learning programs. Perhaps this system can be utilized for a heterogeneous group of students.

Participants—In order to enter the community in natural proportions, it is best for only a few students with disabilities to go to an environment at any one time. While these students are integrated within the community, it is good practice to invite peers to come along (Beck, Broers, Hogue, Shipstead, and Knowlton, 1994). Peers without disabilities who join in should also have specific instructional outcomes identified in regards to their courses and curriculum. For example, the student with a disability may be learning to use money to buy groceries, while a peer may be doing research for a science class on the additives in certain food products.

Staffing—The staff to student ratio while out in the community must be adequate to respond to instructional and safety needs. Because of this, it usually means that coverage for students remaining in the building can be affected. However, you may have noticed that the term **staff**-to-student ratio was used rather than **teacher**-to-student ratio. Community instruction is a perfect time for therapists to deliver services within real, functional activities. Paraeducators can also be used in community settings, given the right training and supervision. Whichever staff member attends, it is critical that they have the information necessary to ensure a safe and worthwhile experience.

Safety—Whenever leaving the school building, staff and students should carry identification cards, pertinent medical information, money, and emergency phone numbers. Before leaving, permission slips should be on file and trip information left with the office. A form, such as the one on page 92, may be helpful in organizing this information.

While these recommendations have been put forth concerning students with disabilities, keep in mind that they can easily apply to all students for whom you may be considering community learning programs. We once again return to the saying "good teaching is good teaching."

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References

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Sailor, W. & Guess, D. (1983). *Severely handicapped students: An instructional design.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Community-Based Instruction Information

Before leaving the building complete this form and file with the secretary.

Date:________________ Home Room:____________________________

Staff out:______________________	Students out:___________________________	Class: ______
______________________	___________________________	______
______________________	___________________________	______
______________________	___________________________	______

Community location:

Time out:_______________ Estimated time of return:_______________

Transportation by: ___ walking ___ school bus ___ taxi ___ public bus ___ other

Reminder: Have you done the following?

- ☐ Permission slips on file
- ☐ Identification cards
- ☐ Medical information
- ☐ Money
- ☐ Emergency phone numbers

Signature: ____

Adapted from: San Diego City Schools Safety Guidelines.

CHAPTER

5

Student Supports

Julie is large for her age and awkward in the way she carries herself. She's different in more subtle ways as well: she laughs a little too loud, she asks questions about things everyone else understands already, and she often has a dazed expression on her face. By this time in the school year most of the other students have found a friend or a group to hang out with, but not Julie. The guidance counselor has mentioned his concerns, and Julie's name has come up at team meetings. You wonder how you can help . . . .

Many educators are concerned for the esteem and feelings of students with disabilities who are in general education settings. They worry about the student being teased, not fitting in, or feeling badly about coming to school. None of us, whether we call ourselves full inclusionists, integrationists, or any number of titles, want inclusion to result in negative experiences. Therefore, it is important to be armed with several beliefs about and strategies for supporting students.

Perhaps the most important belief is that all **students are wonderful resources**. They are capable of bringing a wealth of ideas, unique perspectives, and boundless energy to any situation or problem. Students can often see a problem in a way that an administrator or teacher never would, and therefore be able to solve it when no one else could. They also bring a special spirit to an experience; a spirit born of free thinking, idealism, and optimism. Given these attributes, who would not want to utilize students as supports? This chapter will provide you with some specific ideas on how to go about setting up student support systems.

Another belief underlying successful inclusion programs is that **students learn from their peers**. Actually, anyone ever involved with young students knows that this is true! Students learn slang, behaviors, fashions, games, etc. from each other. However, what is different in the inclusive school is that students are used proactively as teachers, under the guidance of adults. Students can be invaluable in teaching about acceptable behaviors, encouraging communication, modeling physical activities, and reteaching academic concepts. Actually, students can teach almost anything you give them a chance to, and students with disabilities will learn. Many teachers and adults claim that students with disabilities learn far better from working with their peers than the hours spent in adult-led instruction. Perhaps this accounts for the growing use of cooperative learning as a method for instruction in almost every school in the country. It makes sense to weave cooperative teaching into any instructional program.

Another critical factor in successful inclusion programs is the **capacity perspective**. For years special education approached students with disabilities from a deficit point of view: students that have weaknesses need to be fixed. However, general educators, tend to approach students from a developmental point of view. Thankfully, experiences in teaching and inclusion have brought a shift in the special education orientation so that we are beginning to look at all students as capable. By focusing on capacities and strengths, educators find it easier to find common ground between students with and without disabilities, to identify strategies for including students in instructional activities, and to encourage appropriate behaviors across settings. Therefore, it is critical that the school administrator encourage staff to identify student strengths and actively utilize this information every day.

If schools accept the capacity perspective, the natural evolution will be to **move away from categorical thinking** about students. Categorical thinking is evident in many ways: "the LD teacher," the "latch-key" child, "the EMR class," or "the inclusion kids." This type of thinking results in exclusion rather than inclusion, by separating students by labels and abilities. Look around your school for signs of categorical thinking: Do teachers consider themselves skilled at working with only one type of disability? Does your staff refer to students by labels? Do you have classrooms that have special education names instead of teacher names? Wherever you find evidence of this type of thinking, begin a dialogue with the people involved in order to move away from exclusion and toward inclusion.

By keeping these concepts in mind, you will find it easier to guide your staff in their efforts to support students. The remainder of this chapter outlines more specific strategies for implementing student supports.

5.1 Peer Tutoring

"Hold a true friend with both your hands."

NIGERIAN PROVERB

Teachers have been using students to assist other students for as long as anyone can remember. Many teachers have recognized the fact that students have a lot to offer each other in a learning environment. Both the tutee and tutor receive many benefits from the relationship they develop. In addition, teachers appreciate the extra time and help that students can give their peers at times when it is difficult for the teacher to give extra assistance. These tutoring agreements made with students on an informal basis are often called "teacher deals" (Biklen, 1985).

Despite the convenience of these "teacher deals," more often than not, they are not enough in an inclusive school. Rather than relying on teachers to find a student here or there who is willing to tutor, or another teacher who is willing to send students from his or her room to another room to help, it is critical that a more systematic approach is taken. It is just too difficult for teachers, working on their own, to manage all the variables involved with peer tutoring: informing parents, training tutors, finding volunteers, arranging schedules, etc. Instead, with the help of the administration, a structured tutoring program can be developed to assist both students and teachers throughout the school community.

Schools with successful experiences in peer tutoring usually begin by generating interest from a majority of the staff. You may wish to start by discussing the benefits of peer tutoring at a staff meeting, followed up by a listing of the various tasks which would need to be accomplished to get a peer tutoring program off the ground. A school-wide committee can then be formed to implement the project throughout the building.

The first step for the peer tutoring committee will be to determine what type of tutors are needed in the school. Tutors may be within classes or across age groups. Tutors may also serve in an academic role, a social role, or as "buddies." Once this has been determined, a process for selecting peer tutors should be developed. Often, teachers can identify students who have the skills for this role, but it is also important for students to be given an opportunity to volunteer to help their peers. Help Wanted advertisements can be posted around the school, describing the various jobs that need to be filled (e.g., art partner, reader, computer whiz) (Fulton, LeRoy, Pinckney, and Weekley, 1994).

Teachers will also need to develop guidelines for the tutors. Depending on the type of tutoring, these guidelines may be a simple list of dos and do nots (e.g., Do the work with him or her, not for him or her.), or may be much more complex and require specific training. Training for tutors, while cumbersome, increases the likelihood of achieving your outcomes (Staub and Hunt, 1993). Topics to include in the training could be:

- How to hold the student's interest.

- How to orient the student to the lesson or activity.
- How to offer the least intrusive prompts first, before moving to greater amounts of help.
- How to offer simple directions.
- How to reinforce correct responses from the student.
- How to correct erroneous responses.

When tutoring is a school-wide project, it will be most efficient if several students are brought together at one time for training as tutors. The training can be accomplished within several 20-minute sessions led by a special education teacher, the school administrator, or other interested staff member.

As the planning begins for implementing a peer tutoring program, parents should be informed that the school has embarked on such an initiative. A notice, such as the one below, can be sent home with each student or placed in the school newsletter.

Dear Parents,

North Main Street School is excited to announce a new peer tutoring program for our students. After much hard work by our teachers, we have organized a process by which students who would benefit from some extra help in social or academic areas will have the opportunity to be paired up with a peer tutor. In the next few weeks we will be posting Help Wanted signs and recruiting students to serve as peer tutors. These students will then be given three lessons about specific strategies to use when tutoring other students. If you would like your child to be involved in our tutoring program, either as a tutor or to receive tutoring from a peer, please contact your child's teacher.

Once your peer tutoring program is up and running, it will be important to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness. As this will vary in each specific case, the responsibility for monitoring individual students usually rests on the teachers' shoulders. However, in a school-wide tutoring program, the administrator will probably need to monitor issues such as scheduling, parent satisfaction, and the overall impact on curriculum and learning outcomes. This can be done through observations, interviews or surveys of parents and teachers, and a review of test scores and IEP data.

On a final note, be sure to remember that students with disabilities can derive benefit from tutoring relationships by being involved on both ends, as giver and receiver. Encourage teachers to find ways for their students with disabilities to share their talents and skills with other students. By doing so, your peer tutoring program will be bursting with opportunities for all students.

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5.2 Extracurricular Inclusion

"There is no time like the pleasant."

OLIVER HERFORD

When asked to recall some of their fondest memories of school, most people will remember participating in team sports, the drama club, student government, or hanging out with friends on the front steps of the school. These extracurricular activities round out any educational experience and give students the opportunities to mature, learn interdependent skills, take on responsibilities, and apply knowledge to real life situations. Students with disabilities can also benefit from extracurricular activities. Not only is it their legal right to participate, it is inherent to an inclusive philosophy. As an educational leader, you can make sure that your staff realizes their legal and philosophical responsibility to include students with disabilities in after-school activities. To encourage extracurricular inclusion, consider the following strategies:

- Write a statement in your student handbook which makes it clear that **all** students are encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities. Specify that supportive assistance may be available for students with special needs.
- Speak with all faculty advisors and coaches to ensure that they are comfortable in their knowledge and skills for including students with disabilities. They may feel a need for some training, resources, or additional help.
- Be certain that parents of students with disabilities get a copy of student handbooks or other material advertising student activities. Because students with disabilities may not communicate as effectively as others, this kind of information often gets lost between home and school. In addition, students with disabilities may not show the initiative to get involved without encouragement from a parent or family member.

- Discuss extracurricular activities with parents at Planning and Placement Team meetings and other parent conferences. Help them to recognize how extracurricular activities can help students practice the social and academic skills that are a part of the Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- Encourage staff to make inclusion in extracurricular activities part of their professional objectives for the year. Special education teachers can take the opportunity to develop ways to support faculty advisors and coaches in modifying activities as necessary.
- When meeting with faculty advisors and coaches, brainstorm ways that students with disabilities can partially participate in their activity (e.g., for the school play: passing out programs, playing a part, painting the back drops, assisting with costumes, hanging up advertisements, selling tickets and/or refreshments, opening the curtains).
- Review the entire list of extracurricular activities and make sure that all are physically accessible, or could be made so for a student with physical disabilities. Remember that if students are taking a bus trip, it may be necessary to obtain a bus with a wheelchair lift or ramp to allow students in wheelchairs the opportunity to attend. In these cases, encourage the other students to ride along in the special bus, so that the student with disabilities is not isolated.
- Solicit student interest in a program of "buddies" for extracurricular events. Student volunteers can provide support and encouragement to their peers with disabilities during after-school activities. This experience can provide all students with an even greater benefit from the extracurricular activity.
- Observe students with disabilities in extracurricular activities to ensure that they are being fully included; that they are being supported by faculty and peers, that they are participating to the maximum extent possible, and that they are enjoying themselves. This will prepare you to respond to parents' questions and/or concerns about their child's extracurricular involvement.

With these strategies in place, all children will be able to look back one day with fond memories of their time as a student: before, during, and after school.

5.3 Friendships Inside and Outside of School

> *"Loneliness is the most terrible poverty."*
>
> MOTHER TERESA

Some of our oldest and best friendships stem from our school days. It is during this time of experimentation, understanding, and growth that strong bonds are formed between classmates; bonds which continue to support us in our adult years. These same supports are desired and needed by students with disabilities as well. This, in fact, is one of the strongest reasons for inclusion of students with disabilities in general education settings. However, physical inclusion is not always enough. Staff and students may not naturally develop lasting relationships with students with disabilities without some facilitation. In your role as an educational leader, you can ensure that staff have the skills and strategies necessary to facilitate these friendships, both inside and outside of school.

Several strategies follow which have been used successfully to support inclusion. First, however, are two points for consideration in the discussion of friendships. First, in all circumstances it is important to recognize that friendships can be facilitated, but not forced. Any strategies that are utilized should be ones that encourage and support friendships between students, but do not try to mandate them. If the proper supports are in place, friendships which are meant to be will happen. Students who do not wish to be friends or who are not ready for this type of relationship should not be forced to do more than is typically expected. Second, it should be very clear that relationships with students with disabilities should not be based on pity or charity; no one, not even someone with a disability, would consider that a friendship. Keeping these points in mind, and reminding staff and students as needed, the following strategies may be helpful:

- Circles of Friends, a concept developed by Forest and Lusthaus (1989), is a structured group experience for peers of a student with disabilities. It begins with an activity designed to help students become aware of everyone's need for friends (see examples in Beninghof, 1994; Barnes, Berrigan, and Biklen, 1978). This concept is usually facilitated by someone other than a teacher: an administrator or an external consultant. Following this activity, students are asked if they would be interested in befriending the student with disabilities. Students are encouraged to think of several ideas of how to go about this (e.g., setting up a telephone tree, walking to and from school together, joining the student at recess, study hall, or lunch, inviting them over for play dates, parties, a trip to the movies). After a list of activities is developed, students volunteer, on a short-term basis, to participate in the "Circle of Friends" by encircling the student with a disability. Once students have opportunities to interact in these ways, they typically choose to continue and expand their roles and the relationships becomes less structured and more natural.
- Some strategies are as simple as making sure to introduce the parent(s) of the student with a disability to other parents. As a school administra-

tor, you know many of the parents well enough to recognize those that might be amenable to developing relationships with a student with a disability and their family. With this knowledge, you can help parents make these important connections. When parents are at school functions, PTA meetings, or just picking up children after school, be sure to find a way to casually introduce parents, mentioning that their children are in the same class and seem to get along. This may be all that is needed to help the parents bring their children together outside of school.

- Many schools have a phone directory for students and parents. This directory is voluntary; any parent willing to be called for play dates, parties, or other reasons, can include their name and phone number in the directory. If your school has this type of directory, be sure to encourage the parents of students with disabilities to be included and make doubly sure that they get a copy of the directory.
- Working with your PTA, offer to co-sponsor a meeting entitled, "Including Students with Disabilities Outside of School." Check with your local disabilities organizations (see Resources on page 135) to find a speaker who can share with parents various ideas and tips for including students with disabilities in their after-school and weekend activities. For a sampling, see the Facilitating Friendships Between Children With and Without Disabilities Dos and Do Nots chart on page 101. Once given a little bit of information, many parents will feel much more comfortable and willing to invite students with disabilities to join their activities.
- Planning and Placement Team meetings, or other team meetings, are excellent occasions for discussing a student's relationship/friendship skills and experiences. It is a good way to remind all involved that academic success is not the only need of a student. If a student is experiencing difficulty, team members can generate ideas to facilitate friendships in school, offer parents ideas for outside of school, and even consider adding objectives to the IEP that address the needed skills.

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Facilitating Friendships Between Children With and Without Disabilities

DO:

- Answer children's questions as honestly and directly as you can, while avoiding too much detail.
- Help children to find common interests and experiences, (e.g., hamburgers, computer games).
- Highlight children's abilities. Provide activities which allow for various skill levels, (e.g., art projects, going to the movies).
- Treat children as normally as possible (e.g., use the same tone of voice, apply your house rules to all).
- Comment positively on interactions taking place between children.
- Ask the child's parent(s) for suggestions. Typically, a parent would prefer to help than to see their child excluded.
- Teach your child about the value of differences in ability as well as race, culture, etc.
- Organize activities in which children are interdependent, (e.g., sharing materials).

DO NOT:

- Expect three children to play well together. Threes inevitably end up as two against one.
- Overdo adult presence in children's activities. Children will usually do fine by themselves.
- Do things for the child instead of with the child. All children like to feel as independent as possible.
- Talk about children in front of them as if they do not understand. Children with disabilities, like all children, can pick up on your conversation, tone of voice, etc.

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5.4 Extended Educational Programming

"When you're through learning, you're through."

VERNON LAW

Calls to extend the school day and year are growing louder. Many educators, parents, and other community members feel if students spent greater time in school, greater learning would occur. On the other hand, many families and educators welcome the breaks from school as a time to rejuvenate and address other needs: family time, adventures, freedom. Therefore, the argument about extending the instructional program is unlikely to be solved quickly.

In the meantime, though, it has been recognized that many students with disabilities suffer a significant educational loss and regression over the long breaks from school. The intensity of their educational needs require schools to plan for individualized educational programs that either extend their school day, or continue educational activities through the longer school holidays, summer in particular. However, it can be quite difficult to maintain an inclusive program when students without disabilities are not in school! The key is to remember the definition of special education as stated in P.L. 94-142: "special education means specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability." At no point does the definition refer to special education as a **place**. If school personnel can recognize special education as the **service** of individualized instruction, rather than as a place, it will be more feasible to plan for that service outside of the classroom setting.

Keep in mind that not all students with disabilities need extended programming. Therefore, the first step is to determine eligibility, according to your district's standards. This usually entails documenting (or estimating) the amount of regression that occurs during breaks in the school calendar. If it is clear that a prolonged break interferes with the students educational needs, then it is time to plan an extended program.

In some ways, extended school days are easier to provide for than extended school years. The easy part is that you may already have many after-school programs taking place, either in the form of a "daycare" type of arrangement, or extracurricular activities. Because of this, you have a ready-made group of students in which to include the student with a disability (see Extracurricular Inclusion on page 97). However, you may need extra staffing, especially for a student with intense needs, and this may prove difficult. The difficulty is in finding qualified staff who are available and willing to work one or two hours every afternoon. High school students may be a source of assistance for you, but will still need guidance from a certified educator. In addition, paraeducators who already work in the school system may be interested in extending their hours or altering their schedules. Finally, you may consider offering the special education teacher a flexible schedule one day per week in order to cover the coordination of the after-school program.

To address the issue of extended school year programming, you must first look to see what is available in your community. Where do students of the same age spend their time during these breaks? Activities may include summer school, an outdoor camp, a community center program, the YMCA, a public swimming pool, or simply hanging out at the park or shopping center. Once you have a list in front of you of likely places, various members of the Planning and Placement Team can discuss the appropriateness of the various ideas for meeting the student's IEP objectives.

If you choose to participate in a structured program, like a community camp, it may be easiest for you to request that the camp hire and train an additional counselor, who will be paid by the district. This will encourage the camp staff to think of the student with special needs as one of their own, rather than someone who comes along with an adult that is unfamiliar with their routines, traditions, etc. However, it will still be necessary to have the district's special education teacher, supervisor, and/or therapists guide and monitor the program to ensure that instructionally sound practices are followed.

For less structured activities, you may wish to seek out a vacationing college student or recent high school graduate. This individual could be responsible for organizing a schedule of activities and outings that would bring the student with a disability into contact with peers without disabilities (see Community-Based Instruction on page 89 for ideas). Once again, monitoring and guidance from a professional will be necessary.

Finally, be sure to plan a method for communication between the "regular" staff and the "extended program" staff. Both groups will gather valuable insights about the students they work with and can bring about a more effective program if they take the time to communicate.

CHAPTER

6

Family and Community

The Levfevre's PPT has been one you have lost sleep over. The meeting is always is so intense. The family not only has an opinion on how to better teach their daughter Lesley, but also how to better teach the general education students in the class as well. You see Lesley's needs as very different from the other students; she does not learn like the rest of the class, maybe she should be receiving a different type of education? Every meeting is so focused on how they want Lesley to be included like the other kids. In your mind you feel they just have not come to grips with the fact that Lesley is different than the other kids. Yet, why are you losing sleep?

Situations like the one with Lesley's parents are not uncommon occurrences for administrators encountering families of students with disabilities. Understanding feelings like the ones experienced by the administrator in the above example will help you to better collaborate with families. Through mutual understanding, administrators and parents can work collaboratively and amicably toward creating inclusive schools where all students can achieve. Administrators who address the following four key points will begin to understand their feelings like those experienced by the Lefevres' administrator and will find collaboration with families to be successful and meaningful for everyone involved.

- **Stay focused on being "client-centered"**—At the heart of special education legislation is the child and the family. Services, procedures, and safeguards, driven by the child and family (the "clients"), were the intention of P.L. 94-142. The law has always expected that services be individually tailored, or "client-centered." Historically, for general educators, this may seem to be a new concept or one in contrast with the mission of public education: education for the collective "all." Systems and institutions of regular education have been developed to address the mass of students (e.g., working with a "classroom of students," or meeting the needs of "the class"). Special education on the other hand, is oriented to services that meet an **individual student's** needs within the class, to work with an individual student within a class, and to meet the needs of each student in the class. In special education the emphasis is placed on the individual while in general education the emphasis has been placed on the group. Having an understanding of this fundamental difference in the design of education will better prepare you to understand your reaction or others' reactions to the individual vs. whole dichotomy. Families of students with disabilities tend to view education as something that needs to be individualized for their child, as their child may have some needs which typically developing students do not have. As general education is designed to address the needs of typically developing students, individual planning will be needed to address the unique needs of most students with disabilities.

  It is important to recognize that the strategies teams identify as unique and individualized for the student with a disability may be excellent strategies or techniques for other students as well. You will begin to appreciate how all students can benefit from inclusion. The student with a disability must have the technique in order to learn, but in the majority of situations the technique will certainly enhance, not detract from, the learning of the other typically developing students. Inclusion need not take away from or dilute what is needed for the class as a whole.

- **Ask parents what they want**—Historically, the school as an institution has made overtures for families and community members to become involved in the education of students and to assist the schools in educating students. Traditionally, though, schools have only **invited** families and community members participation, as opposed to having an open-door policy for participation at will.

  The attitude of we (the experts), will ask you (the parent), when we want your opinion, although not stated, has been a prevailing attitude of educators. For this reason, administrators might feel uncomfortable with parents of students with disabilities, when the parents tell the school what is best for their children and expect the school to listen. Parents of students with disabilities have had many experiences which have taught them that there are few experts that hold all the answers for successfully educating their child. The "expert" that is too often left out of the discussion is the parent. Administrators who are not afraid to admit that educational "experts" are not just teachers, related services staff, and other school personnel, but parents as well, will be more successful in collaborating with parents and developing successful integrated programs.

The notion of parents as partners, rather than parents as assistants in the educational process, is rapidly gaining momentum in the general schooling of students. Parents and community members are starting to take a more proactive and assertive role in letting schools know what they want without first being asked. School/business partnerships are developing, community committees are being organized to assume management functions in the schools, members of the community are being asked or are approaching the schools and providing them with input on what they want their children to know, be able to do, and be like upon graduation. School personnel are no longer the sole designers of what students are learning or how schools.

Asking parents what they want for their children is at the heart of school reform, and listening to what parents want for their child that happens to have a disability and understanding why they want that, is a key to collaborating with families. This will help ensure successful, inclusive programs for students with disabilities in your schools.

- **Empathize with the family's situation**—"Walk a mile in my shoes" is an appropriate colloquialism that targets the need to empathize with parents of a student with a disability. Through empathy you will gain insight into the often painful, rollercoaster ride of experiences many parents of students with disabilities undergo. You will begin to understand where the intensity of focus and emotion many parents display at meetings or during discussions comes from. Emily Pearl Kingsley (1993), a parent of a child with a disability, relates that having a child with a disability is analogous to planning for a fabulous dream vacation to Italy, with all the great expectations and anticipations, only to be shocked, confused, angered, and ultimately pained when your plane—on its way to your dream vacation in Italy—has a change in flight plans and you step off and find yourself in Holland.

  Parents plan and build up many expectations about the upcoming birth, and when that child is born with a disability, it is as confusing as stepping off the plan in Holland, when you were expecting Italy. Yes, you will need new guide books, learn a new language, and meet a different culture than you were prepared for. But, soon you will begin to see windmills, and tulips, and Rembrandts. Yet, "for the rest of your life," Emily Pearl Kingsley relates, "you will say, 'Yes, [Italy] was where I was suppose to go. That's what I planned. That's where all my friends went.' And the pain of that [being denied your dream vacation—your healthy baby] will never, ever, ever go away, because the loss of that dream is a very significant loss" (p. 11). In addition, for many parents of children with disabilities, this is only the beginning of a series of frustrations, with which most families will never have to contend. Developing empathy for the family's situation places you, as an administrator, in a position of understanding the often intense, emotional, and spirited attitudes of parents when confronted with educational issues regarding their children.

- **Appreciate the need for normalcy**—Understanding families' needs for integrated services can be better appreciated if you are able to relate their experiences to ones which you may have had. These families would welcome any normalcy to their lives. They experience so many "differences" day to day that finding situations where more typical activities may occur is of great interest and concern to them. These families have years of experience in dealing with organizations and bureaucracies that have been developed for the "typical" person or "typical" set of life experiences. Any uniqueness or situation that lies outside the norm becomes an added burden or obstacle to overcome.

  Try to recall several experiences that you have encountered in order to help you appreciate these families' frustrations. For instance, if you are left handed and have had to live in a right handed world, you may begin to understand. Have you ever had to arrange for insurance coverage for a medical emergency, only to discover your doctor or the emergency service is not covered by your plan? A bit aggravating? Or, have you ever broken a leg or arm or wrist, and since you were feeling fine otherwise, tried to continue your daily routines alone and at the same pace? You remember feeling better when you said, "Only three more weeks until I get this cast off!" Have you ever been totally infuriated when you have needed money in a hurry and the banks are closed, the money machine is out of money, or even worse, the ATM eats your card so you cannot look for another machine if you wanted too? Frustrations, anger, and other emotions that you feel from these experiences are routinely and continuously encountered by families of students with disabilities as they deal with systems that have been created for the typical, ordinary, majority, routine situations, people, or groups of our society. And dealing with the educational system is just one more of these typical systems. In addition, for these families there are no dates for the casts to come off, for the ATM cards to be returned, or for left-handed stores to open in the local mall.

The intention of this chapter is to assist you in understanding and empathizing with the families of students with disabilities so that a more collaborative approach to developing integrated services for students in your school may occur. Think "client-centered," listen and accept parents' ideas, empathize with their situations, and appreciate each family's need to be treated in a "normal" fashion. Ideas in this chapter will relate to how to involve families in developing mutually satisfying interactions between home and school. It will also address how to include families and community members in the school to provide better services to all students.

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6.1 Informing the Community

"Water can both sustain and sink a ship."

CHINESE PROVERB

To inform or not inform?—that is the question many school administrators are asking. Some feel that to inform the community at large of inclusion plans or efforts is tantamount to directly asking for concerns, arguments, and problems; while others feel that for inclusion to be successful, the community must be aware of the benefits that inclusion brings to all. Of course, the answer to this question must depend, in part, on the type of support your school already receives from the community and the relationships and communication systems that are already in place. If the relationship with the community is fairly open and healthy, it will be easier to embark on a public information campaign about inclusion. If not, you may wish to move more slowly and quietly. Instead of loud fanfare, try some of the methods for informing detailed below:

- School newsletters provide a gentle way to regularly inform parents and others of inclusion activities. Throughout the body of the newsletter, references can be made to the diversity of learners, disability awareness activities taking place in the school, or unique instructional activities which allow for all students, with and without disabilities, to experience success. These indirect references can reinforce the message that inclusion is just part of the everyday happenings at your school.
- If you have parents actively involved in your building as volunteers or committee members, they will quickly become aware of your inclusion activities. Parents have a talent for noticing what is happening in their school and spreading the word. Be sure to support parent volunteers by answering their questions honestly, while still maintaining confidentiality. In addition, talk with teachers about ways to support parents in the classroom. For example, when a parent volunteer is working with a group of students, he or she may need some hints about how to effectively involve the students with disabilities.
- If your school library has a "Parents Corner," consider adding some books and tapes on the topic of disabilities. These materials might be written for adults, or books that parents can share with children. There are a growing number of quality materials available on this subject. For more information, check Sharon Dryer's *The Bookfinder: A Guide to Children's Literature About the Needs and Problems of Youth Aged 2 and Up*.
- Curriculum materials that students bring home or discuss with parents can also inform about inclusion. If teachers are infusing their curriculum with various lessons on abilities and disabilities as well as other diversity issues, parents will see the results at home. Occasional homework assignments about these topics, especially assignments which encourage parental involvement, may educate parents at the same time they educate students.

- Form a Diversity Committee to bring together volunteer members of the faculty, families, and community to discuss diversity in the schools (see Educational Community Diversity Committees on page 112).
- The Parent Teacher Organization in your school may be very helpful in embracing inclusion. Many PTOs have sponsored presentations and discussions on the topic of inclusion. Even more exciting is when the topic addresses how a parent can include youngsters with disabilities in their homes or after-school events. One caution with this strategy is if this type of meeting is held prematurely, it can fuel unnecessary fear and concern. It may be better to wait until inclusion is going smoothly and the kinks have been worked out. If, however, you feel that your community needs this kind of information up front, be sure that your presenter is very capable of handling difficult questions. Hopefully you will not need to worry about this, but it is better to be prepared!

. . . .

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6.2 Parent Information and Resource Person

> *"When dealing with people remember, you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but with creatures of emotion."*
>
> DALE CARNEGIE

Special education is certainly the "maze" it has been referred to in the book *Negotiating the Special Education Maze* (1990). There is a sea of jargon, regulations, procedures, rights, etc. that parents must wade through when their child is identified as disabled. Parents can be overwhelmed with the information they need to know to be informed participants in their child's special education planning. Some parents may be overly reliant on the schools for this information, while other parents are very skeptical of the information provided by the schools. How can this best be addressed to enhance collaboration between home and school?

For parents of children with disabilities, the emotions encountered when they begin to realize their children are different from the neighbors' children, the other children at the daycare, or older siblings, can be of all types (Powell, 1985; Featherstone, 1980). These may range from denial to grief, to anger, to guilt, to hopelessness—to name a few. During this time it is often difficult to know what to do or whom to turn to. Parents may be weary or mistrustful, or on the other extreme may be unquestioning or naively accepting of the school's interpretation. Schools will experience both these extremes as well as many behaviors in between; they will encounter family members who can be difficult, confrontational, passive, disinterested, overly zealous, etc. How can you, as an administrator, address this issue in order to enhance collaboration between home and school?

Administrators want to work cooperatively with parents in developing an educational plan that will work for the student and be compatible with the mission of the school. If parents are uninformed or display a variety of emotions as a result of learning of their child's disability, collaboration can be significantly hampered. Supporting a parent during this time of questioning, skepticism, or blind acceptance by utilizing a unbiased, objective resource and information service, will be a great boost to the home/school collaboration for educational programming. Administrators can offer parents a contact person (e.g., another parent) who is highly knowledgeable and empathetic about having a child with a disability as well as special education. This resource person can assist parents in locating information, answering questions, and attaining advice and support for the decision making and planning process they are about to experience, or numerous other services of use to families.

In Connecticut, a statewide Parent Education Partnership or PEP has been developed to assist towns in this process. An individual or individuals from your town can be trained to be an "expert" in resources and information to parents in your system. This parent offers other parents an empathetic, knowledgeable, unbiased support and information system to help them negotiate the special education maze. The resource person or PEP Rep., as Connecticut refers to them, is kept current on state and federal laws and regulations through periodic statewide meetings and resource mailings. If your state cannot address this statewide, consider beginning your own PEP Rep. system in your district. The following are steps to follow when organizing your own system locally:

- **Identify a person or persons** who will gain knowledge about a variety of information and resources concerning special education and your system.
- **Make this person available** to the parents of students with disabilities when their children are referred to special education, when the family has questions, or when an unbiased perspective is needed. Some towns have developed letters, brochures, business cards, or oral presentations at PTO meetings to introduce the representative to other parents. This resource person can play many roles depending on what is needed.
- **Hold discussions** between the school and the resource person to identify areas of focus based on parental and professional experiences regarding both what parents have wanted in the past and what specific information the school district would like the parent to know. This may be information on disabilities, where to find out more information on a variety of disabilities, an explanation of the special education law/regulations and due process rights, information on who to contact in the state, or an explanation of how and when it is best to access advocates or legal council.

For further questions or information about Connecticut's program, contact the Special Education Resource Center (SERC) in Middletown, Connecticut.

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6.3 Educational Community Diversity Committees

> *"In and through community lies the salvation of the world."*
>
> M. SCOTT PECK, M.D.

Today, the diversity of people in our society is expanding by leaps and bounds. The reality of a global society is propelling schools to respond to the increasing diversity in their classrooms. Schools and their communities are beginning to mutually address the need for responsive curriculum and instructional methods that prepare students to live and work in a world of diversity. Valuing, respecting, and appreciating diversity of thought, ethnicity, sexual orientation, capability, etc. should be considered essential elements of effective schools. To promote inclusive schools for students with disabilities, administrators may want to broaden and address the issues encountered as a result of many types of diversity in the education setting. Through broadening the topic, more commitment can be generated from different interest groups to address inclusive communities for all. The following are steps to consider when creating change within your educational community.

1. **Organize an Educational and Community Diversity Committee to discuss diversity in the schools.** In this forum all manners of diversity and related issues in regards to the schools may be discussed. The issues encountered by parents of students with disabilities in a typical school may not be much different than the issues encountered by a family of an ethnic minority (e.g., acceptance, prejudice, harassment, or unequal or different treatment). Solutions may be generated that address all representative groups. Ideas may include instruction of diversity through curricular infusion/embedded curriculum, solutions for reducing separate treatment, ideas to eliminate or respond to harassment or teasing, and strategies for fostering tolerance, acceptance, mutual respect, and collaboration.

   The members of this committee can include many different constituent groups including administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, and community members. Schools and towns have done this through soliciting volunteers to serve or selecting an equally balanced representative group from several constituency groups.

2. **Conduct a round table discussion to list areas of concern that the schools are encountering due to the diversity issues.** To elicit members' ideas on issues, have the committee respond to a series of questions. Questions may include:
   - What is meant by diversity?
   - What kinds of diversity are being encountered in our schools?
   - What areas of diversity are not being encountered in our schools?
   - What do we want our students to encounter?
   - What values do we want our students to hold regarding diversity?
   - What issues are being encountered in our schools as a result of diversity?
   - What issues should our students be exposed to as a result of an increasingly diverse society?
3. **Categorize and prioritize responses.** Once answers to questions are generated and issues are identified, the committee needs to discuss solutions or actions to be taken. The group can do this through problem solving strategies such as brainstorming. List reduction can be used to identify compatible or redundant solutions. These solutions can then be organized in a list or action plan format to be presented to the school board, school building improvement committee, PTO/PTA, or building administration for review, feedback, consideration, and implementation. The committee can continue to exist as an advisory board to the school or as an active partner with the school to address all relevant issues.

6.4 Communication Strategies

". . . and co-operation depends upon the ability of people to talk purposefully with each other."

GEORGE FLUHARTY AND HAROLD ROSS

When collaborating with parents to identify appropriate programs for students, effective communication is needed. Typically, communication needs to be ongoing and not limited to the traditional phone calls and home-school communication notebooks. The following ideas have proven successful for students whose educational programs require frequent refining. Typically these programs are for students with severe disabilities or for those students who have multiple disabilities. The multiple disabilities need not be severe, but due to the interaction of the disabilities, they may complicate the learning process significantly.

Idea One: Preset Meeting Agendas

As a student's annual planning meeting can be quite lengthy, efficient use of time is essential. Ensuring that everything has been covered and that parents and staff feel they have been heard, listened to, and have had the opportunity to share what they feel is relevant for the student's program is important for positive working relations between home and school. Utilizing a preset agenda can help the meeting's efficiency and effectiveness while supporting collaborative communication between home and school.

Prior to a student's annual program review, a conference can be held between the parents and the student's teacher or case coordinator to identify a list of items to be covered at the meeting. This allows the parents to prepare for the meeting as well as to ensure that all relevant information is addressed. Parents can feel more comfortable during these meetings as they know what to expect and can come better prepared to participate. The following agendas are recommended as outlines that teams can utilize. These outlines can be tailored to the specific student and issues related to that student. In addition, it is helpful to list the amount of time the team anticipates they will need to discuss each item. This ensures that priority discussions will be allocated sufficient meeting time.

Agenda One

1. Introductions. Be sure that parents and staff know everyone at the table. Name tags or name plates may be helpful.
2. Review recommendations from previous meeting and update their status. This allows continuity in programming and assures nothing has been left undone or forgotten from the previous meeting.
3. Review current performance. This may include reports from school staff and the family as related to different school and home/community environments and/or different areas of development (motor, communication, social, cognitive) or subjects (reading, math, science).

4. Review the agenda.
5. Review recent evaluations.
6. Identify strategies that are useful for instruction. This focuses on successes and positive supports for instructing the student.
7. Identify goals and objectives for student growth.
8. Set future agenda.
9. Identify contact people. This is to help all members know who is responsible for the results of the meeting and who to contact in case of questions.

Agenda Two

1. Introductions.
2. Review agenda.
3. Family discusses current issues and concerns.
4. School discusses current issues and concerns.
5. Review evaluations.
6. Identify goals or action plans.

Idea Two: Routine Home/School Meetings

The following communication tool has proven successful time and again for implementing complex, frequently changing programs, and for parents or faculty who need frequent communication in order to feel comfortable or trusting of other team members.

Things to consider when holding routine meetings:

1. **Schedule weekly/monthly meetings with time limits.** For instance, the meeting can always be held on the first Tuesday of each month from 11:30-12:30. Preset dates and times allow for several things. This recognizes the value of everyone's time, acknowledging that all parties have other commitments. It prevents meetings from dragging on, making staff feel the parent is inconsiderate of their time, or having meetings rushed through making the parent feel that the staff is not really interested. Some schools suggest that working parents bring their lunch and eat with the staff while they talk. Over time members of the group may feel less of a need to meet. These meetings should only be reduced if mutually agreed upon.
2. **Agenda or Not?** The agenda may be preset with one item or several, or the agenda may be open ended with parents and staff discussing concerns or sharing successes. There does not always need to be a preset agenda, but agendas do help the group keep to a time limit and better focus if a problem needs solving.
3. **To hold a meeting or not?** Meetings should always occur as originally scheduled whether there is an agenda item or not. Just because there is not an issue or an area of concern does not mean that the group should not meet. The meeting provides an opportunity for rapport building, recognizing and celebrating accomplishments, and being creative. It also allows parents to be active partners in their child's program, rather

than only coming to school for report card conferences or when there is a problem. These meetings demonstrate the tremendous efforts staff make to students' educational programs. Meetings may also allow for staff to ease into inclusion if they are uncertain of its efficacy. There is time for questions, reflection, generating solutions to problems, and needed support. Staff can feel safer testing out a new idea and then reviewing its success with others. Parents are better able, then, to view the school as trying new ideas to help their child be included. Parents are brought into these creative problem solving sessions and can feel their experiences are valued by the schools.

Idea Three: FAX Communications

Another form of communication that is helpful, particularly if a student is medically fragile, very young, or new to a setting or staff, is the use of a facsimile machine. Using a FAX between home and school or parent's place of business is a way to communicate information quickly or to provide the receiver with periodic updates of a student's status. This may be a helpful method for parents of students with medical complications that want assurance of their child's condition at periodic times throughout the day. It is also helpful for parents who are difficult to reach by phone, but still want to be kept alerted in case of medical emergencies.

This strategy has been successfully used by a counselor at Killingly Intermediate School in Killingly, Connecticut. A student, his/her parent(s), and the school counselor can communicate about the student's behavior at home during the evening and weekend hours. Through the use of the FAX, the student reports on his/her behavior and the counselor responds with immediate feedback. This has been very successful in maintaining students' positive behaviors at home.

This strategy may also be useful in assuring a more timely communication between home and school, as days can go by while school personnel and families play phone tag to discuss issues or accomplishments. Meanwhile issues regarding the student remain unaddressed. Consequences to behavior, whether positive or negative, have a much better impact if they occur as soon as possible after the behavior has occurred. Through the use of the FAX, home and school can have more immediate communication.

CHAPTER

7

Business Management

You arrive at school in the morning, ready to start on several new ideas to support inclusion in your building. Before you even settle into your chair, you find a stack of notes concerning leaky sinks, equipment orders, and late school buses. By the time you deal with each of these, your morning seems to have disappeared and you still have not done anything about inclusion . . . .

Fiscal, facilities, food, phone, and vehicles! Each of these, along with a myriad of other business management issues, are known all too well by administrators. If allowed, they consume your time and leave you feeling that there is no room on your agenda to really affect students. But cheer up! Even while attending to these management issues, you can encourage inclusion of students with disabilities in your schools. You can incorporate your facility, fiscal resources, equipment, and transportation into your overall program of inclusion.

This chapter will provide you with some practical strategies for handling the "administrivia"; but first here are three general guidelines to keep in mind when thinking about the connection between business management and inclusion.

1. When making business plans or decisions, be aware of the traditional **"in the box" thinking** about special and general education. Typically, these two entities are thought of as separate: separate budgets, separate

supplies, separate curriculum, separate rooms, etc. In order to creatively include students with disabilities, school administrators must break out of the box by constantly questioning whether this separation is necessary. In some circumstances (e.g., certain types of funding) it may be necessary to deal with two systems; however, in most cases it is simply the established traditions and paradigms that cause school personnel to operate this way. By breaking out of this box, you can free up many more possibilities and creative solutions to everyday problems.

2. **Recognize the benefits for all students** that can come from even the most mundane administrative decision. Benefits may include increased access to staff, facilities, materials, and a more equal distribution of funds. As McLaughlin and Hopfengardner-Warren (1994) reported, something as simple as instructional material costs may decrease when special educators begin ordering materials from the same catalogues used by their general education colleagues. Savings like these can be used to support all students. In addition, school facilities which are made accessible with ramps and other adaptations, can serve the student in the wheelchair as well as the student who has broken his/her leg. By recognizing these benefits, and pointing them out to others, you may prevent questions and concerns about the fairness and cost of inclusion.

3. When making business decisions, **be aware of unspoken messages** that your actions may send to others. For example, if all of the classroom doors have a teacher's name on the outside (e.g., Mr. Milling), and the special education room has "Resource Room" or "Learning Center" on the outside, what message might be read? Subtle differences in facilities and other business areas can undermine much of the instructional inclusion taking place in your building. You may know that it was not meant that way, but you may not get a chance to explain to a parent, visitor, or disgruntled staff member. Just as you carefully decorate your home to reflect who you are to guests, or wear certain clothes to communicate your professionalism, you must also carefully evaluate the messages or impressions your business decisions make in regard to inclusion.

By keeping these factors in mind as you walk around your building and move through your day, you can have a positive impact on inclusion and still take care of the never ending pile of administrative tasks on your desk.

References

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7.1 Transportation

"Out of inclusion comes invention."

THOMAS SKRTIC

One of the most exciting moments for any young student entering school is his or her first ride on a school bus. Looked forward to for years, it is both a culmination of years of anticipation and the first step on a new journey. What better way to send a message that all belong, than to begin with inclusion at this first step?

Transportation is an area that offers many opportunities for inclusion. When students are being transported—whether to and from school, on field trips, or for extracurricular events—social integration opportunities abound. It is a time when students have some freedom to visit, get to know each other, and test some independent skills. It is a perfect time for students with disabilities to practice these same skills.

Of course, there are some barriers which may need to be overcome so that all students will be safe and successful. The first barrier may be the mindset that all students with disabilities need special transportation. This is simply not the case. Most students can manage, if given the chance, on a typical bus without any undue adaptations. Make sure that your staff is regularly asking at PPTs, "Is there any reason why this student cannot ride the regular school bus? If so, what can we do to overcome that barrier?" For the safety of some students, you may need to advocate for adapting the regular vehicle with necessary seatbelts or harnesses. If done throughout the bus, this provides an obvious benefit for all students. If funding makes this unlikely, then choose a seat in the middle of the bus and adapt it as necessary for the student with the disability.

For other students, a well structured behavior contract that clearly outlines the rules, expectations, and consequences may be all that is needed to support their participation on the bus. When designing this type of plan, remember that many students may need direct instruction in bus behavior. For example, they may need strategies for handling teasing, communicating with the bus driver if there is a problem, keeping themselves occupied during long rides, and the importance of staying in their seats. This is particularly important if the student's bus experience has been a "special" one, with small groups and close supervision. It may be very appropriate to have Individual Education Plan (IEP) objectives for bus behavior, especially if the team decides to exclude the student from the typical bus because of behavioral issues.

Additional levels of assistance may be another avenue for accommodating students with disabilities. By using older peer helpers or bus aides, it may be possible to include students who need just a bit of assistance or supervision. High school students may be able to buddy-up with younger students with disabilities for after-school bus runs (or to assist walkers). If bus aides are necessary, you may wish to head off complaints about cost by comparing the costs of out-of-district transportation to segregated facilities. A recent cost analysis study of inclusive schools versus traditional schools stated that "the overall impact of inclusion should cause total transportation costs to decline" (Goldman, 1994, p.18). In addition, keep in mind that having an extra person on the bus benefits all students—not just the students with disabilities.

If it is necessary, for medical or physical reasons, to use a "special" bus, do not give up on inclusion. Ask the question, "Does this student need a special bus all the time?" One school district designed a plan where a student in a wheelchair could "walk" with friends to school, using a special bus only in inclement weather (McLaughlin and Hopfengarden-Warren, 1994). If the answer to the above question is "yes," you still have options. Simply identify several students who live in the same neighborhood and make arrangements for them to be transported on the special vehicle, too. Most parents will be pleased that their children will have a shorter bus ride and closer adult supervision. This strategy can also be used for field trips or extracurricular activities. Typically, students will fight over who gets to ride in the bus with the elevator!

Transportation, while not high on the excitement list of any administrator, can be a satisfying task when your efforts make it possible for all students to belong.

References

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7.2 Facilities and Equipment

"The best way out is always through."

ROBERT FROST

Ramps and specially equipped bathrooms are the first things that come to most people's minds when they think of accessible facilities; luckily, the vast majority of our school districts have taken steps over the last few years to make their buildings accessible in these ways. Therefore, getting the student with disabilities into the building usually is not the problem—it is the smaller accessibility issues that arise throughout the course of a day that seem to cause the greatest concern:

- "How can I fit all of this adaptive equipment into my classroom?"
- "If special education funds have been used to purchase a computer, can other students use it?"
- "Should students with and without disabilities use the same bathrooms?"
- "How do I explain all of this medical equipment to my other students?"

As the school administrator, you have the advantage of seeing the big picture. You are more aware than most your staff of the opportunities and limitations of your facility and equipment. For example, you may know that there is a storage closet with some extra space (if only those out-of-date texts were finally thrown out!) for storage of adaptive equipment. Or that Mrs. Rodriguez has been hankering for years to switch to a classroom on the other side of the building, which would free up the classroom right next to the accessible bathroom. It is your challenge to convince the staff that if concerns and problems are raised openly, that you can work with them to find solutions. Do not allow your staff to decide that "inclusion won't work," simply because of facility and equipment challenges. Keep in mind that this may be an excellent time to call in your custodian and therapists for their problem solving skills. For instance, therapists who serve several buildings may be especially helpful as they bring with them knowledge of how other schools have tackled similar problems.

When considering physical accessibility, the easiest method is to walk through the environment with a clear picture of the width of a student's wheelchair, the dimensions of his or her equipment, or the actual item in question. For example, it a student uses a walker to get around, borrow a walker and use it yourself to get a feel for uneven spots in the flooring, obstacles in high-use pathways, etc. Better yet, have the student take a walking tour with you to determine where his or her difficulty spots may be. If a paraeducator is concerned about managing a wheelchair down the hill to the playground, go with him or her and try it together. Perhaps by applying the brake, ever so slightly, the resistance will make the task more manageable. Or perhaps you will see an even better solution along the way. For a more complete accessibility check, utilize an Architectural Barriers Checklist (Beninghof, 1994) or confer with your district administrator in charge of facilities.

The connection between equipment and inclusion is simple: whenever possible, allow all students to utilize the same materials and equipment. If special education dollars have been used to purchase a computer for a student with disabilities, great! Now, put that computer in the inclusive classroom and whenever appropriate let other students use it as well. Or, if the computer needs to be in the resource room for some reason, allow all students to use that room, thus diminishing the stigma that may be associated with the "special education class." Students can also be encouraged to use specially equipped bathroom stalls when they are not needed by someone with a disability. When this happens, students become more comfortable with "special" places and realize that "it's no big deal." The same holds true when students are given straightforward information about specialized equipment. For example, one school was including a young student who required a ventilator periodically throughout his day. During the holiday season, the mother of this student was contacted by several parents from the class. They wanted to know where they could purchase the neat "space machine" her son used in school, as their child wanted one as a gift! Students should be armed with knowledge and insight about all aspects of an inclusive classroom.

One precaution about sharing equipment: it is **not** appropriate for students with custom designed chairs, wheelchairs, orthotics, or the like to share. While it may be acceptable for each student in the class to have one turn in the new student's wheelchair, more extensive use should be discouraged. Your therapists can assist you in making these determinations.

References

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7.3 Fiscal Resources

> *"For anything worth having one must pay the price; and the price is always work, patience, love, self-sacrifice."*
>
> JOHN BURROUGHS

What are the real costs of inclusion? Arguments abound for both sides: "It costs more!" and "It can save money." In actuality, neither argument is a very sound one when deciding for or against including students with disabilities. However, fiscal issues can never be ignored altogether, even by those promoting inclusion. If so, you will be considered "reality impaired!" As an administrator, how can you look at costs in a realistic manner? First, you may wish to review the growing body of cost analysis research. Although still somewhat questionable, it frequently concludes that while inclusion may cost more in the short term, it does not appear to cost more over time than the alternative segregated model of service delivery (Goldman, 1994; McLaughlin and Hopfengardner-Warren, 1994).

Second, to be realistic you must consider how expenditures related to inclusion affect other students. A prime example comes from a court case (*Sacramento Unified City School District v. Rachel H.*, F. 3d, 20, 9th Cir., 1994) in which the district attempted to argue that costs for inclusion for a particular student were extreme. The family argued that costs, such as for staff development activities, should be divided among all the students that were likely to benefit from teachers' improved skills at accommodating differences. The judge agreed. In other words, when someone suggests that the cost of including a student is too high, you must first divide the cost among all the students who are actually benefiting from the expenditures. When this is done, the cost directly related to the student being included usually decreases dramatically.

Third, it is critical that you and others advocate for the reallocation of any funds saved by bringing students from out-of-district placements home. Out-of-district tuition can sometimes be ten times the cost of in-district per pupil expenditures. If these students are brought to home schools, much of the difference in dollars will be needed for staff, equipment, materials, and training. Do not support discussions that allude to "savings"; these dollars must be reallocated in order to successfully support inclusion. Without these funds, inclusive practices usually fumble and fall, leaving a bad feeling about inclusion, when in reality it is not inclusion that failed, but the administrative/fiscal support.

Finally, keep in mind the costs of due process hearings and law suits. Even when a district "wins" (if you believe that anyone really wins in these situations), the dollars spent are still enormous. Perhaps it might make sense in most cases to give inclusion a try, and spend the dollars more constructively. Specific fiscal strategies found useful in some school districts include:

- Joint purchasing between the special and general education budgets may provide resources to the school which may not be possible otherwise. Computers come quickly to mind. If students with disabilities are included in every general education classroom, special education funds may be available to purchase a computer for those students, to be housed in the general classroom.

- Sharing of staff among neighboring districts may also keep costs down. For example, some students with more significant disabilities may need a part-time paraeducator to assist them. Perhaps the district next door has a part-time paraeducator already on staff, who might like the extra hours. In addition to making your search much easier, it provides the opportunity to cost share things such as training, extended school year programs, etc.
- Check with your central office special education administrator about equipment which may be warehoused. Often, districts will purchase a special piece of equipment for a student, only to find that the student moves out of town shortly thereafter or that the student outgrows the equipment. These pieces of equipment find their way to dusty storage rooms and get forgotten over time. You may not need to spend money purchasing the latest breakthrough, if an old, but reliable one still exists.
- Many vendors or equipment and medical suppliers will offer schools a "loaner" for a short period of time. This can happen in two ways. First, if you are considering purchasing a piece of equipment, such as a computerized communication device, vendors may be willing to let you have a trial run with it to be sure it is the right choice for the student. This may prevent misguided purchases. Second, if you, your therapists, or other purchasing agent, have a good relationship with a vendor, they may offer loaners or discounts on older equipment or previously used pieces. It can pay to be nice to vendors!
- Because some expenses related to inclusion are low incidence, it can be worthwhile to explore consortium activities with neighboring districts. For example, training in augmentative communication systems may only be necessary for two or three staff in your district. By coordinating with other districts, you can pool resources and hire a trainer to work with a dozen staff from around the region.
- Work with your personnel department to ensure that job descriptions are as flexible as possible. For example, one district was including a student who was not yet toilet trained. Although there was a full-time special education paraeducator in the classroom, her job description did not include toileting tasks. Therefore, the district ended up hiring an additional paraeducator whose job description clearly described toileting duties. Whenever possible, be proactive about examining job descriptions for these types of barriers.
- Many districts save money on paying out costly benefits by hiring two part-timers, rather than one full-time paraeducator who splits his or her time between two classrooms. While this does result in a significant cost-saving, this strategy should be used judiciously. It can also result in fragmentation of services and resentment on the part of staff.
- For students requiring minimal special education services, some districts hire certified special education tutors instead of using special

education teachers. Tutors are usually paid on an hourly basis for services provided, and usually at a lower rate than an equivalent teacher. Obviously, their roles are also more limited; they will provide direct instruction to a student, but are not usually responsible for collaborating with teachers, attending planning meetings, etc.

- When schools are on the verge of placing a student in an out-of-district setting, two alternatives can be considered which may result in partial inclusion and cost savings. The first strategy is to place a student on "homebound" instruction, usually requiring a minimum of ten hours of tutoring, but provide the tutoring on school grounds after hours. This allows the student to be in the building, near other students who may be participating in extracurricular activities, but not likely to be upset by or interfere with others' education. It is clearly not full inclusion, but it may be a better alternative than complete exclusion from school. The other strategy applies to students who may traditionally have been placed in a clinical day treatment program for students with emotional difficulties. As an alternative, some districts are maintaining the student in the home school for the first half of the day and then sending them to a private afternoon counseling program, paid for by insurance. Again, this is not full inclusion by any means, but may be preferable to a full-time, out-of-district placement.
- To target special education dollars for inclusion supports, many administrators are making the most of the Individual Education Plan (IEP). Once any needed staff training or consulting service is recorded on the IEP, the district is then legally required to provide these. Of course, be aware that doing this without first discussing it with your special education administrator may result in some conflict. However, many special education administrators favor this approach, as it makes it easier to justify the expenditures to the board of education.

If you are a seasoned administrator, you already have a wealth of strategies for stretching your school budget. Fiscal issues regarding inclusion simply take the same type of creative problem solving.

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CHAPTER

8

Personnel Considerations

After last evening's workshop on inclusion you feel as if your staff are beginning to rally around the concept. Participants were enthusiastic and full of good ideas to make inclusion work in the building. However, you are plagued by the nagging realization that last night's participants were volunteers: staff who are already supportive. What about the staff who choose not to attend?

In the promotion of inclusion for students with disabilities nothing is more likely to make it successful and pervasively evident, than the attitudes of your school faculty and staff. From the classroom teacher, to the cafeteria worker, to the school secretary, each can and will reflect the attitude the school holds toward including students with disabilities. The educational administrator can provide leadership to all people in the school—employees, volunteers, or visitors—in order to promote the inclusion of all students in the community of the school. Administrators addressing personnel issues will find the greatest success with inclusion when they address the areas of peoples' attitudes, staff evaluation, service delivery, job descriptions and responsibilities, and scheduling.

Affecting peoples attitudes is a difficult task, but one which yields the greatest results. Not all people believe in, understand, or want to give the effort needed for including students with disabilities in the schools. Whatever the reason, a change in attitude away from one that is impeding inclusion, to one that promotes inclusion is needed. It is essential for you, as the administrator, to ascertain which of these conditions is affecting inclusion. Each condition has a different approach for achieving a change. Examples of conditions that can block progressive change include:

- **Not believing inclusion is possible or appropriate** can be easily influenced by the old "seeing is believing" trick. Ways of achieving this are delineated in Chapter One: Leadership.
- **Not understanding** how to include students with disabilities is probably the easiest area to remedy. Educators need information, an opportunity to practice, and feedback on their attempts. Providing information on disabilities, suggesting innovative service delivery strategies, and designing unique ways to schedule staff time, will all be of assistance in this matter.
- **Not willingly to make the effort** can be the most difficult reason for not including students with disabilities that you will face. No effective administrator enjoys dealing with personnel issues that require progressive discipline or out right confrontations with the people they work with. But when the job of educating students is not getting done, administrators need to face the realities of why they are in their positions to begin with. As an administrator, your primary mission is not to make adults happy or comfortable, nor is it to develop a social network for yourself; your position is to directly benefit the students. In the course of implementing strategies to address staff's unwillingness to help all students, you may encounter conflict that will result in something less comfortable that you, your staff, and faculty are accustomed to.

Through specific job descriptions, effective staffing patterns, and progressive evaluation and feedback (all areas outlined in this chapter), you can successfully address these above conditions for students and faculty. You will find that people of all job categories from your staff and faculty falling within each of the strategies in this chapter. These strategies address issues regarding teachers, but also offer ideas for working with secretaries, custodial staff, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, and volunteers or visitors at your school. Addressing personnel issues related to including students with disabilities may be one of the most difficult areas to affect change, yet it has the potential to be the most rewarding as the greatest results can be achieved.

8.1 Job Descriptions

"Too many people are ready to carry the stool when the piano needs to be moved."

ANONYMOUS

For most of us, job descriptions are simply pieces of paper that take up residence in our employment folders. When first interviewing, we may have looked at the description, agreed with its basic tenets, and then forgotten about it. However, job descriptions, while fairly mundane, can be critical documents to support inclusion. When inclusion is not working well, it is often because of confusion or disagreement about the roles and responsibilities of the various people involved. While an effective job description cannot solve every one of the problems associated with implementing inclusion, it is clear that ineffective job descriptions can make matters much worse. Job descriptions that are too broad in scope have little influence when it comes to clarifying expectations to unwilling staff. Job descriptions that are too narrow can result in rigidity of thought and the ultimate segregation of duties according to categorical labels. Somewhere in the middle you must find a balance that supports the rights of all students to a quality education.

What can a school administrator do about job descriptions? Ongoing communication with the personnel department and the union representatives in the district is essential. If these individuals are all involved in the planning of inclusion from the beginning, it is less likely that there will be roadblocks along the way. In an elementary school in Connecticut, a student with severe physical disabilities was to be included in a general education classroom. It had been determined by the team that she would need a full-time paraeducator to assist with her physical needs. The personnel department proceeded with interviewing and hiring for the position, without ever knowing that lifting was required. The new paraeducator began the school year with the student, intensive on-the-job training was provided, and four days later she quit because of back pain. This example of inefficient communication is not uncommon; you can avoid this type of costly mistake by educating your personnel department about inclusion and your specific requirements.

In addition, you can work with your district to rewrite job descriptions; although an arduous task, it will pay dividends in the long run. The following job-related behaviors and responsibilities may be considered as appropriate components of various job descriptions. Each issue must, of course, be written to reflect the type of position (e.g., teacher, paraeducator, etc.) and level of responsibility:

- Demonstrates and encourages respect through the use of (noncategorical) language. For instance, person first, as in "student with disabilities."
- Models behaviors that encourage acceptance of others and their differences.

- Cooperates with colleagues through active participation in consultation sessions and problem solving.
- Assists in assuring that hallways and classrooms are safe and accessible for all students.
- Provides a nondiscriminatory program by utilizing multi-modality instructional techniques, evaluating with consideration to disability, and identifying field trips and other activities which are accessible to all students.
- Assists students as necessary with daily living skills such as bathroom skills, hygiene, dressing, eating, and mobility (for teachers this could refer to skills as identified as instructional objectives on the student's IEP).
- Pursues appropriate information and support from specialists regarding the use of adaptive equipment, positioning, or other therapeutic issues.
- Uses a variety of reinforcement methods, individualized on the basis of student need and responsiveness.
- Uses a variety of data collection techniques, as warranted by individual student need.
- Familiarizes themselves with current issues and strategies in educating all students.

To guide thought and discussion surrounding job responsibilities, you may want to obtain a copy of *Guidelines for the Delineation of Roles and Responsibilities for the Safe Delivery of Specialized Health Care in the Educational Setting*, a document compiled by a task force of NEA, AFT, CEC, and the NASN. While not a binding document concerning job responsibilities, it does provide guidance as to "who should be doing what," when dealing with students with medical and physical disabilities. For example, it recommends that for an issue such as toileting, paraprofessionals should be designated to perform the task. However, it clarifies that it is not in conflict with professional standards for teachers, related service personnel, or nurses to perform the task. In addition, when students are receiving toilet training, teaching personnel should be designated to perform the task. The document addresses areas such as dental and oral hygiene, lifting and positioning, feeding, and many other medical and health procedures.

References

The Joint Task Force for the Management of Children with Special Health Needs. (1988). *Guidelines for the delineation of roles and responsibilities for the safe delivery of specialized health care in the educational setting.* Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

8.2 Staffing Patterns

> *"There's no delight in owning anything unshared."*
>
> SENECA

Using combinations of staff with different credentials may be a way your district can efficiently and effectively utilize resources while promoting inclusion. Several states offer dual certification in special education and general education. Additionally, in many states teachers have taken extra coursework to achieve this dual certification status. In situations where this exists, there are possibilities which can promote integration. When developing class placements, consider placing special needs students in a regular class where a dually certified teacher is located. Provide this teacher with additional support staff to balance the intensity of needs the special education student may have. This classroom teacher can provide special education and general education to the students in that class. This limits the amount of segregated services the students receive while providing the specialization of instruction and planning that each student requires.

Throughout the country the model of special education staff and/or remedial education staff team-teaching in general classrooms is gaining popularity. Although popular, this could lead to inefficient service delivery if multiple staff are simultaneously providing services or provide similar services to the students in a classroom, but at different times of the day. For the general classroom teacher, the door looks like it is revolving as adults come and go throughout the day. The reality of teacher consultation may be minimal if multiple teachers need to connect in order to coordinate services. A solution to these scenarios is the utilization of one support staff per classroom to serve all the students in the room, whether special education eligible or remedial services eligible. If remedial staff are assisting special education students, the IEP needs to reflect special education services and remedial services implemented by the appropriate parties. For remedial students receiving assistance from special educators, remedial plans need to be maintained; special education staff may assist the students, as long as there are special education students simultaneously receiving the services. Administrators need to examine their funding arrangements so as not to inappropriately comingle funds or services. However, with the increased interest in inclusion on the federal level, creative measures like these may be allowable.

Many districts are hiring at least one dually certified educator per grade level per building. The grade level teams utilize the expertise of their grade level special educator and their own ingenuity for grouping and regrouping, instructional methods, and problem solving to assure all students' needs—disabled or not—are met at their grade level.

8.3 Evaluation and Feedback

> *"A pessimist is one who makes difficulties of his opportunities; an optimist is one who makes opportunities of his difficulties."*
>
> REGINALD MANSELL

When implementing special education services to students in general classrooms, staff need a variety of new skills to assist in successfully providing these services. Staff need to collaborate and consult effectively, they need to know how to deliver instruction in a team-teaching fashion, they need to know how to modify general instruction to adapt to the students disabilities, and they need to know how to develop strategies to maintain students in general classes without jeopardizing any student's education. In order to achieve all of this, educators need training in necessary skills as well as the opportunities to practice and receive feedback on their efforts.

One method of providing feedback to teachers is through the evaluation/supervision process. This method can be utilized with your existing evaluation system or a modification of one which works best for you and the teachers involved. The major principles include:

- Preconferencing with all staff who will be together in the room during the lesson.
- Observing the lesson that is being jointly taught.
- Postconferencing with all involved parties.

Through **preconferencing**, both teachers and staff can discuss their joint efforts for the lesson. The supervisor can provide feedback strategies for the team to work more effectively together in terms of delegating responsibility for the lesson, utilizing each other's expertise during the lesson, articulating joint objectives, etc.

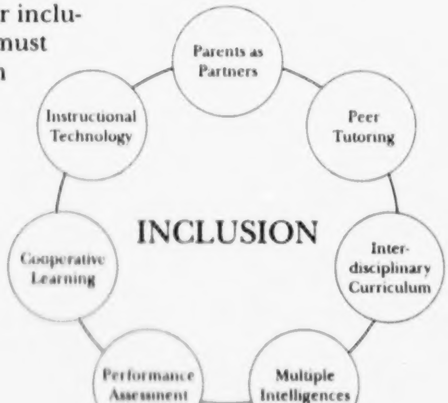
Through **observing the jointly taught lesson**, the supervisor can watch for joint position, team-teaching effectiveness, use of staff, use of expertise, effective use of both teachers' time, students' abilities to handle dual instruction, efficiency of instruction, etc.

The final phase is to **postconference with all involved parties**. Feedback is given to the teachers regarding how they can jointly improve their effectiveness or to highlight ways in which they were effective. Assistance can be given to generate group solutions for the issues. Both teachers must be involved in this feedback process; if only one is provided with feedback, joint ownership of the lesson is not reinforced. Also, segregation of staff to special education personnel or to general education personnel is unintentionally encouraged. Joint conferencing supports the cooperative nature of this type of teaching and the result is usually more effort put forth on both educators' parts.

Conclusion

Recently, one of the nation's largest professional associations for educators held their annual conference. Their conference guidebook was filled with descriptions of over 500 workshop sessions available to participants. However, of this vast selection of topics, only one session was devoted to the topic of inclusion. Amazed and concerned by this phenomenon, we (the authors) attended session after session, with inclusion—our most current interest—in mind. We learned about approaches for assessing and instructing for a variety of learning styles. We saw examples of interdisciplinary curricula. We entered into the debate on what makes a good student portfolio. We watched videos of successful peer tutoring programs. As a result of three days of lectures and discussions with some of the brightest and creative educators from around the nation, we created the graphic below as a way of envisioning inclusion as one part of a whole.

What became clear to us was that for inclusion to be a successful endeavor, it must be viewed as an integral part of each of these aspects of education. It is best discussed and debated as a natural part of all other school endeavors. The term itself implies that inclusion cannot be viewed as an add-on to the already enormous task of educating students, but instead must be seen as an integral part of what we already do.


Parents as Partners
Peer Tutoring
Inter-disciplinary Curriculum
Multiple Intelligences
Performance Assessment
Cooperative Learning
Instructional Technology
INCLUSION

Believing that inclusion is a way of thinking about each of the educational endeavors in which we are already involved, seems to make the task of implementing it in our schools lighter. It makes it possible to look at what a school is already doing and then consider ways to enhance those efforts. Many administrators have found it helpful to use the structure presented in this book as a way to explore and expand upon what they are already doing. The following questions can guide this evaluation:

1. What are we doing in each of the following areas to enhance inclusion?
    - Leadership
    - Planning
    - Assessment
    - Curriculum and Instruction
    - Student Supports
    - Family and Community
    - Business Management
    - Personnel
2. What else could be done to successfully implement inclusive practices in our school?

There are so many different starting places and strategies that can bring about successful inclusion in your community—we hope we have provided a few ideas to help along the way.

Resources

The following agencies and associations may be of help to you in your efforts to include students with disabilities. These agencies may be able to direct you to branches of their organization within your own communities, connect you with consultants or speakers, answer questions, inform you of other available supports, or refer you to various materials they publish on the topic of inclusion.

ARC, National Organization on Mental Retardation
500 East Border Street, 3rd Floor
Arlington, TX 76010
(800) 433-5255

The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps
11201 Greenwood Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98133
(206) 361-8870

Council of Administrators of Special Education
A Division of the Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

National Down Syndrome Society
666 Broadway
New York, New York 10012
(800) 221-4602

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
P.O. Box 1492
Washington, D.C. 20013
(800) 999-5599

Special Education Resource Center
25 Industrial Park Road
Middletown, CT 06457-1520
(203) 632-1485

IDEAS

for

INCLUSION

The School
Administrator's Guide

As educational leaders, school administrators play a crucial role in developing and nurturing the values and culture of the schools and districts in which they work. It is therefore essential that administrators possess the understanding and skills to ensure that their schools become places where all students are provided with an appropriate and useful education. ***Ideas for Inclusion: The School Administrator's Guide*** offers solutions to the common obstacles faced by administrators as they work to realize a truly inclusive environment for their students.

Ideas for Inclusion provides numerous strategies for examining and enacting positive change in the areas of:

- **Leadership**—Sharing a Vision and Preparing the Way for Its Realization
- **Planning Processes**—Drawing the "Map" to Successful Inclusion
- **Assessment**—Collecting Data to Ensure Continuing Improvement
- **Curriculum and Instruction**—Developing IEPs, Modifications, and More
- **Student Supports**—Enlisting Peers and Community Resources to Enhance Integration Success
- **Family and Community**—Fostering Communication and Cooperation
- **Business Management**—Making the Most of Fiscal, Facility, and Transportation Resources
- **Personnel**—Maximizing Human Resources Through Role Clarification, Staffing Patterns, and Evaluation

Ideas for Inclusion: The School Administrator's Guide was developed in part due to the success of its companion piece, ***Ideas for Inclusion: The Classroom Teacher's Guide to Integrating Students With Severe Disabilities***. By utilizing both of these highly practical resources, administrators and the teachers with whom they work will be better prepared to successfully meet the challenges of creating truly inlcusive schools.

Sopris West

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